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ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

BY

168

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

Placidus (itaque SAPIENS) et æquus erroribus, non hostis, sed correptor peccantium hoc quotidie procedit animo; "Multi mihi occurrent vino dediti, multi libidinosi, multi ingrati multi avari, multi furiis ambitionis agitati: O[...] OPITIUS ASPICIAM [...]QUAM ÆGROS SUOS MEDICUS."

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ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

NO. CXVII.—THE FOLLY OF BRINGING UP CHILDREN TO A LEARNED PROFESSION, WITHOUT THE PROBABILITY OF PROVIDING THEM WITH A COMPETENCY.

THAT admiration is the effect of ignorance, is a truth universally confessed; and nothing so forcibly excites the wonder of the illiterate plebeian, as the character of profound erudition.

Dazzled by the splendour of literary honours, many an honest parent has prevented his son from acquiring a fortune behind the counter, to see him starve in a pulpit.

These reflections were occasioned by meeting an old friend at a coffee-house one evening last week. His looks were meagre, his dress shabby, and he sufficiently apologized for the rustiness of his coat by the following narrative:

"My father," said he, after some preliminary conversation, "was a shoemaker of tolerable business in London; a very honest man, and very much given to reading godly books, whenever he could steal a moment from the lap-stone and the last. As I was the only child, he took great delight in me, and used frequently to say, that he hoped in time to see me archbishop of Canterbury, and no such great matters neither; for as to my parentage, I was as good as many a one that had worn a mitre; and he

would make me as good a *scholard* too, or it should go hard with him.

"My destination to the church was thus unalterably fixed before I was five years old; and in consequence of it, I was put to a grammar-school in the city, whence, after a thousand perils of the cane and perils of the rod, I went to the university on an exhibition of fifteen pounds a year, which my father obtained from one of the city companies, with no small difficulty. So scanty an allowance would by no means defray the enormous expense of university education; and my father, whose pride would not let me appear meaner than my companions, very readily agreed to pay me forty pounds out of the yearly profits of his trade, and to debar himself many innocent gratifications, in order to accomplish in me the grand object of all his ambition.

"In consequence of my father's desire that I should complete the full term of academical education, I did not go into orders till I was of seven years standing, and had taken the degree of Master of Arts. I was therefore incapable of receiving any pecuniary emoluments from my studies, till I was six-and-twenty. Then, however, I was resolved to make a bold push, and to free my father from the burthen of supporting me with half the profits of his labours. The old man was eager that I should attempt to get some kind of preferment; not, as he would generously say, that he wanted to withdraw his assistance, but that he thought it was high time to begin to look up at the bishopric.

"I hastened to London as the most ample field for the display of my abilities, and the acquisition of money and fame. Soon after my arrival, I heard of a vacant lectureship; and though I was an entire stranger to every one of the parishioners, I resolved to trust my cause to honest endeavours, and a sedu-

lous canvass. I shall not trouble you with an enumeration of the several indignities I suffered (for I had not lost my university pride), from being under the necessity to address, with the most abject supplication, chandlers, barbers, and green-grocers. Suffice it to acquaint you, that myself, and another young clergyman of regular education, appeared on the day of election to have but seventeen votes between us; and that a methodistical enthusiast, who had once been a carpenter, bore away the prize with a majority of a hundred and twenty.

"Though disappointed, I was not dejected; and I applied to a certain rector for his curacy, the duty of which consisted in prayers twice a day, a sermon on Sundays, and innumerable burials, christenings, and weddings. I thought myself happy, however, in being offered forty guineas a year, without surplice, or surplus fees; but how was I chagrined, on being told by the rector, on the very Sunday I went to officiate, that I need not trouble myself, as another gentleman had undertaken the whole duty at forty pounds!

"I waited a considerable time in expectation that something else would fall: but heard of nothing in which there was the least probability of success, unsupported, as I was, by friends, and unknown to fame. At last, I was informed by an acquaintance, that a certain clergyman in the city was about to resign his lectureship, and that he would probably resign in my favour, if I were early enough in my application. I made all the haste I possibly could to reach this gentleman before his resignation; and found very little difficulty in persuading him to intercede in my favour. In short, his endeavours, joined to my own, secured the lectureship, and I was unanimously chosen. The electors, however, expressed a desire that I would quit my place of residence,

which was at a distance, and live in the parish. To this request I consented; and immediately fixed myself in a decent family, where I lodged and boarded for fifty pounds a year; and as I was not so ambitious as my father, I congratulated myself on the happy event, and sat down contented and satisfied. But, alas! how was I confounded, when my collectors brought the annual contribution, to find it amount to no more than the exact sum of twenty-one pounds two shillings and three-pence three farthings! I was under an immediate necessity of discharging my lodging, resigning my preferment, and quietly decamping with the loss of no inconsiderable sum out of my pittance.

"Thus, Sir," said he, "I have now for these twenty years been tossed about in the world without any fixed residence, and without any certain prospect of my bread. I must not, however, complain, as I am well assured there are many in the metropolis in situations very similar to mine. Yet sometimes, I own, I cannot help being foolish enough to imagine, that I might, perhaps, have been happier, and I am sure I could have been richer, had I been brought up to my paternal awl and last. My poor father died about two years ago, and I have reason to think, his disappointment and sorrow for my ill success hastened his dissolution.

"I now support myself tolerably well in the capacity of, what the world ludicrously calls, a Hackney Parson. And though I do not get quite so much as a journeyman shoemaker, I make shift to keep soul and body together; and I thank God for that. If, Sir, you could recommend me to read prayers occasionally, or bury a corpse, here is my address, up four pair of stairs"——

He was proceeding, but he had too powerfully excited my sympathy; and after consoling him to

the best of my power, I took my leave of him, not without severe reflections on those parents, who, to indulge a childish vanity, bring up their offspring to misery and want.

NO. CXVIII.—ON DECENCY AS THE ONLY MOTIVE OF OUR APPARENT VIRTUES, AND PARTICULARLY OF OUR RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR.

WHATEVER may be the vices of this age, it cannot be said to be particularly distinguished by hypocrisy. Selfishness reigns triumphant; and men, for the most part, pursue whatever they think conducive to their own pleasure or interest, without regarding appearances, or the opinions of others, except, indeed, when their interest or their pleasure are immediately concerned.

Even they who fill offices of confidence and honour in the community, are, in this age, fond of divesting themselves of that external dignity with which the wisdom of our ancestors judged it right to surround them. They descend with a peculiar kind of pride from their natural or political eminence, and will not even display the appearance of those virtues and abilities which are absolutely necessary in their offices and stations. They ostentatiously exhibit a carelessness and profligacy in their conversation and behaviour, which, if they really possess, ought to displace them from their rank, and strip them of their blushing honours.

In those who fill public offices, or who are fixed in the more important professions, a regard to external decency is itself a virtue. But, in truth, if the present disordered state of things would permit, none ought to fill those offices and professions, whose

regard to decency does not arise from a regard to virtue.

There are, indeed, many who are esteemed good sort of persons, but whose goodness is unprincipled, and appears to arise solely from a regard to external decorum, or what is called the saving of appearances. And this motive, poor and contemptible as it is, in comparison with rational principles arising from conviction, is very often the only avowed motive for the regular performance of all external duties, but more particularly of those which concern religion.

Our religion teaches us to separate one day out of seven for religious purposes. But many men consider the institution merely as a foolish superstition; and therefore spend the Sabbath, like the charming people abroad, at cards and in dissipation, and very much lament those gross prejudices of the common people, which render it decent and prudent not to open the theatres, and enliven the horrid dulness of the Seventh Day by public diversions. Even mighty good sort of people, as they are usually called, hesitate not to confess, that a regard to external decency is one of the chief motives of their regular conduct in observing the Sabbath, and other virtuous practices of our forefathers.

It would not be difficult to trace this motive of decency in many of the apparent virtues, which display themselves, with no little ostentation, in every department of human life. But it is really better to pay that deference to virtue which arises from assuming the appearances, than by impudent and avowed contempt of it, to injure others by the example. To have merely a regard to decency in common life, and in a wicked and unprincipled age, becomes, in some degree, virtuous. We will not,

therefore, expose this unsound virtue to severe censure, except when it appears in religion, where, whatever appearances are insincere, constitute hypocrisy of a most detestable kind, hypocrisy founded on self-interest.

Pope has said, that Secker was decent, and that Rundle had a heart. Whether the censure or the praise was just is not mine to determine. All I shall remark on the passage is, that though decency may smooth the way to courts, and insinuate itself into the highest seats of preferment, it is a heart only which is capable of deriving, from the success, a pure and solid satisfaction. Though decency without sincerity may be approved by narrow politicians, and even gain the applause of the multitude, by deceiving them; yet let not the hypocrite triumph, but remember, that there is one before whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden.

NO. CXIX.—ON THE ANIMOSITIES OCCASIONED IN THE COUNTRY BY THE GAME LAWS.

In a late paper on the disagreements of a country neighbourhood, I purposely omitted one of the most fruitful causes of them, intending to consider it in a paper by itself, consistently with its extensive and important operation. I believe it will be allowed by all who have made remarks, that the individuals of this nation are more seriously and inveterately divided by disputes about the Game, than by controversies which make much more noise in the world on the subjects of politics or religion. What remains among us of savageness and brutality is chiefly preserved by the mean and selfish greediness of those

who possess a thousand peculiar advantages, and who yet meanly contend for an exclusive right to destroy the Game; that usufructuary property which the Creator intended to be possessed by the first occupant, like the air, light, and water.

Some restraints, however, of that kind, which tend to prevent the poor labourer from wasting his valuable time, might, perhaps, be neither unjust, nor in any respect attended with inconvenience. But the Game Laws, as they now exist in England, are a disgrace to the noble fabric of our free constitution. They are illiberal in their nature; they originated in slavery, and they lead to tyranny. It is remarked by Burn, and the great Commentator on our legal system, that, in one statute only for the preservation of Game, there are not less than six blunders in grammar, besides other mistakes; so that one is led to conclude, that this part of our boasted code was drawn up by a committee of boorish country esquires and stupid fox-hunters. Indeed, the whole body of the Game Laws is replete with perplexity, absurdity, and contradiction. What can be more ridiculous, than that the legislature of a mighty empire should require one hundred a year as a qualification to shoot a poor partridge, and only forty shillings to vote for a senator? "There is another offence," says Blackstone, "so constituted by a variety of acts of parliament; which are so numerous and confused, and the crime itself of so questionable a nature, that I shall not detain the reader with many observations thereupon. And yet it is an offence which the sportsmen of England seem to think of the highest importance; and a matter, perhaps the only one, of general and national concern; associations having been formed all over the kingdom to prevent its destructive progress; I mean the offence of destroying such beasts and fowls as are ranked under the

denomination of Game." Upon the whole, it may be truly said, that an Englishman, who has a regard for the honour of his country, and sense enough to see the mean and arbitrary spirit of the Game Laws, and the nonsense of the letter, must hide his face in confusion, when he considers how much time and attention have been spent upon them by the British legislature.

Rural diversions certainly constitute a very pleasing and proper amusement for all ranks above the lowest. Every man who has a just claim to the title of gentleman, or, indeed, who is capable of spending his time in amusement without injuring the public or his own family, ought to be suffered to partake of them: if he gives up his hours, his labour, and his thoughts to the pursuit, he has earned a right to the object, since the object is of a nature which cannot be appropriated while alive and at liberty. A fellow-creature is agreeably amused and benefited, and no man robbed, since the bird that flies in the air no more belongs to the tenant of the mansion-house, than the sun-beam which equally shines on the cottage and the palace. Poor is the opulence, and little the grandeur, that shows a disposition, which would undoubtedly engross, if it were possible, the light and the air.

With respect to the matter of a trespass, it is certain, that a lord of the manor is no less liable to be prosecuted for it on his own manor than any other person, whether qualified or unqualified. It shows, therefore, the ignorance as well as arbitrary disposition of these petty princes, when they claim the privilege of prowling for prey, without control, on their neighbour's land, and of excluding all others from their own. In short, it is extremely doubtful what privileges the lord of the manor possesses; and whether he has a better right to hunt and shoot,

without a particular grant from the king, than the meanest subject whom he bullies and brow-beats. The contemptible laws which have been made on this business certainly want illustration and amendment. Indeed, they ought to be torn out of the statute-book of a free people, and the memory of them, like that of feudal ignorance and slavery, execrated.

There is a practice particularly mean and oppressive, which very much prevails in this selfish age, among the engrossers of that part of the creation which God and nature have constituted free as the seas and winds. They do not consider the pursuit of game in the liberal light of a gentlemanlike diversion, but view the hare and the partridge as provender for the table at once genteel and cheap. They therefore seldom give themselves the trouble to join in the chase, or carry the gun over the furrows; but select some idle peasant, who, by poaching, has acquired a skill in the arts of destroying game, and send him to provide pheasants, and bid defiance to his superiors, whenever the master has company to dine with him, and wishes to save an article in the butcher's account. This hero sallies forth under the protection of the lord or lady of the manor; and if he meets a curate, or an apothecary, or a reputable tradesman, or even a neighbouring lord of the manor, boldly insults them, threatens to shoot their dogs or seize their fowling-pieces; and justifies all his insolence by alleging, that what he does or says is all by his master's order. Appeal to that master, and, probably, the insults are aggravated; or, if he pretends to uncommon affability, he will allow that the fellow is apt to be a little foul-mouthed, but, upon the whole, is a very faithful servant. The poor man himself might, indeed, be punished both for his trespass and his ill-usage; but though

he insulted his prosecutors in the field, he is ready, like all upstart and petty potentates, to bend on his knees for mercy, and usually disarms the generous by pleading a wife and six children. I know not which ought to predominate, compassion for the deluded peasant, or contempt for his employer. It is surely enough that the rich man claims an exclusive right to the commoners of nature himself; and he ought by no means to be suffered to commission the lowest plebeian to do that which he prohibits in gentlemen of the professions, of fortunes as independent, if not so great, as his own, and of minds often much greater.

It is in the power of these hirelings, who seldom possess much principle, to involve all the country in animosity. The landed gentry, especially nabobs and upstarts, usually possess a share of pride fully proportionate to their estate and mansion-house. The hireling of one trespasses on the dominions of another. Reprisals are made. Each defends his representative. One thinks himself as *good* (for that is the phrase) as the other. No concessions can possibly be made. Hatred, of the bitterest and most rancorous kind, mutually takes possession of these lords in miniature; and many a hunting would end, if vassals could be procured, like that of Chevy Chace, in a bloody battle.

If compassion did not intervene, one might be much entertained with so ludicrous an object, as that of creatures, who pretend to reason, benevolence, Christianity, and education, rendering their existence mutually painful by fierce quarrels, secret but venomous hatred, expensive and vexatious litigations, occasioned by objects of a nature truly trifling in themselves, and which, allowing them every possible praise, can be called no more than innocent diversions. Are we not still children with

all our beard and gravity about us, if we play till we quarrel? Our conduct, in this respect, is almost too absurd to admit of serious expostulation. It may furnish scenes for mirth at a puppet-show, or a farce at Bartholomew Fair.

However, I think it necessary, before I conclude this subject, to declare, for the sake of avoiding the malignant misinterpretations of gossips and scandal-dealers by profession, that there are no allusions in this paper either personal or local; and that I have not been pleading for a privilege in which I am interested, not being inclined to hunt, nor able to shoot.

I will beg leave to add one passage on the subject from Blackstone, for the information of those among sportsmen, who are too tenacious of their exclusive rights, and who are able to read it.

" Another violent alteration of the English constitution, consisted in the depopulation of whole countries for the purposes of the king's royal diversion; and subjecting both them, and all ancient forests of the kingdom, to the unreasonable severity of forest laws, imported from the continent; whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the king's deer, yet he might start any game, pursue and kill it, upon his own estate. But the rigour of these new constitutions vested the sole property of all the Game in England in the king alone; and no man was allowed to disturb any fowl of the air or any beast of the field, of such kinds as were specially reserved for the royal amusement of the sovereign, without express licence from the king, by the grant of a chase or free warren: and those franchises were granted as much with a view to preserve the breed of animals, as to indulge the subject. From a si-

milar principle to which, though the forest laws are now mitigated, and by degrees grown entirely obsolete; yet from this root has sprung a bastard slip, known by the name of the Game Law, now arrived to, and wantoning in, its highest vigour, both founded upon the same unreasonable notions of permanent property in wild creatures, and both productive of the same tyranny to the commons: but with this difference; that the forest laws established only one mighty hunter throughout the land, *the Game Laws have raised a little Nimrod in every manor.* And in one respect the ancient law was much less unreasonable than the modern; for the king's grantee of a chase or free warren might kill game in every part of his franchise; but now, though a freeholder of less than one hundred a year is forbidden to kill a partridge on his own estate, yet nobody else (not even the lord of the manor, unless he hath a grant of free warren) can do it, without committing a trespass, and subjecting himself to an action."

NO. CXX.—ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GOVERNING THE TEMPER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many complaints of the calamities of human life, it is certain, that more constant uneasiness arises from ill temper than from ill fortune. In vain has Providence bestowed every external blessing, if care has not been taken by ourselves to smooth the asperities of the temper. Bad temper imbitters every sweet, and converts a paradise into a place of torment.

The government of the temper then, on which the happiness of the human race so greatly de-

pends, can never be too frequently or too forcibly recommended. But as it was found by some of the ancients, one of the most efficacious methods of deterring young persons from any disagreeable or vicious conduct, to point out a living character in which it appeared in all its deformity, I shall exhibit a picture, in which I hope a bad temper will appear, as it really is, a most unamiable object.

It is by no means uncommon to observe those who have been flattered for superficial qualities at a very early age, and engaged in so constant a series of dissipating pleasure, as to leave no time for the culture of the mind, becoming, in the middle and advanced periods of life, melancholy instances of the miserable effects resulting from an ungoverned temper. A certain lady, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Hispulla, was celebrated from her infancy for a fine complexion. She had, indeed, no very amiable expression in her eyes, but the vermilion of her cheeks did not fail to attract admiration, and she was convinced by her glass, and by the asseverations of the young men, that she was another and a fairer Helen. She had every opportunity of improving her mind; but as we naturally bestow our first care on the quality which we most value, she could never give her attention either to books or oral instruction, and at the age of fifteen or sixteen could scarcely write her name legibly, or read a sentence without hesitation. Her personal charms were, however, powerful enough to captivate the heart of a thoughtless heir, very little older than herself. Her vanity, rather than her love, was gratified by the alliance; and when the assiduities of promiscuous suitors were at an end, she found herself sinking in the dead calm of insipidity. When love was no more, other passions sprung up with all the luxuriancy of rank weeds in a soil where no sa-

lutary herb has been planted in the vernal season. Pride, that fruitful plant, which bears every kind of odious quality in abundance, took root in her heart, and flourished like the nettle or the hemlock on the banks of the stagnant pool.

Her husband was the first to feel its baneful effects. Though the match was greatly to her advantage, she persuaded herself that she might have done better; and that her good fortune was by no means adequate to the prize which her beauty and merit might have justly claimed. With this conviction, and without any habits or abilities which might lead her to seek amusement in books, she found no diversion so congenial to her heart, as the tormenting a good-natured, young, and agreeable husband, who, by marrying, had excluded her from the probability of a title. As a small compensation for the injury received, she assumed an absolute dominion over him, his fortune, and his family. He dares not differ in opinion from her; for on the slightest opposition, her eyes dart fire, her cheeks glow with indignation, and her tongue utters every bitter word which rage and malice can dictate. The comfort of every meal is poisoned by a quarrel; and an angry vociferation is re-echoed from the parlour to the kitchen, from the cellar to the garret, by night and by day, except in the awful and ominous pause of a sullen silence.

The poor husband, who, with every amiable disposition, possessed also the virtue of patience, bore the evil as long as human nature could bear it; but as years advanced, and her fury increased, he sought a refuge at the tavern, and in the composing juice of the grape. Excess and vexation soon laid him in the only secure asylum from the stings and arrows of an outrageous temper, the silent tomb.

The children, after suffering every species of per-

secution which an angry, though foolishly fond mother could inflict, no sooner arrived at maturity, than they began to look for happiness in an escape from home, where neither peace nor ease could find a place. The daughters married meanly, unworthily, and wretchedly, contented to take refuge from the rage of a furious mother in the arms of footmen and hair-dressers; the sons ran away, and became vagrant and wretched debauchees; till in mere despair, one of them entered as a soldier in the East India service, and the other put an end to his own existence.

The mother, after shedding a few natural tears, and wiping them soon, began to feel her pride and passion amply gratified in an absolute dominion over an estate, a mansion-house, and a tribe of servants, whose dependent situation made them bear her fury with little resistance. But she enjoyed her reign but a short time; for as her mind was incapable of resting on itself for support, she sought relief from the bottle of cordial; and, heated one day with a large draught, and a violent passion with one of the maids, she burst a blood-vessel, and expired in a scolding fit, her tongue still quivering after her heart had ceased its pulsation.

I believe the originals of such a picture as this, are much less common in the present age, than they were in the last century. Ladies were then secluded from the world till marriage, and as they were very superficially educated in every thing but potting and preserving, it is no wonder if they became termagants, shrews, scolds, or viragos. They had no right ideas of themselves or the world around them, and yielded, without opposition, to those violent emotions which arise perhaps in every mind when it is totally uncultivated.

Culture of the understanding is, indeed, one of

the best methods of subduing the heart to softness, and redeeming it from that savage state in which it too often comes from the hands of nature. The more our reason is strengthened, the better she is enabled to keep her seat on the throne, and to govern those passions which were appointed to be her subjects; but which too often rebel, and succeed in their unnatural revolt. But besides the effect of mental culture, in calling forth and increasing the powers of the reasoning faculty, it seems to possess an influence in humanizing the feelings, and meliorating the native disposition. Music, painting, and poetry, teach the mind to select the agreeable parts of those objects which surround us, and by habituating it to a pure and permanent delight, gradually superinduce an habitual good-humour. It is of infinite importance to happiness, that the mind should be accustomed from infancy to turn from deformed and painful scenes, and to contemplate whatever can be found of moral and natural beauty. The spirits, under this benign management, contract a milkiness, and learn to flow all-cheerily in their smooth and yielding channels; while, on the contrary, if the young mind is teased, fretted, and neglected, the passages of the spirits become rugged, abrupt, exasperated, and the whole nervous system seems to acquire an excessive irritability. The ill treatment of children has not only made them wretched at the time, but wretched for life; tearing the fine contexture of their nerves, and roughening, by example, and by some secret and internal influence, the very constitution of their tempers.

So much of the happiness of private life, and the virtues of mothers and daughters in particular, depends on the government of the temper, that the temper ought to be a principal object of regard in

a well-conducted education. The suffering of children to tyrannize, without control, over servants and inferiors, is, I am convinced, the ruin of many an amiable disposition. The virtues of humanity, benevolence, humility, cannot be too early enforced. Every method should be used which reason, religion, prudence, and experience, can suggest, to accomplish the purpose of sweetening the temper, and banishing the furies from society. May the endeavours be successful; and may we only read, that there have indeed been such animals as shrews and viragos, but that the breed is extinct in England, like the breed of wolves!

I have been much pleased with the lovely picture of Serena, in Mr .Hayley's instructive poem, the Triumphs of Temper; and I cannot conclude, without earnestly entreating the ladies, to view it as a looking-glass, by which they may learn to dress their minds in a manner which can never be out of fashion; but which will enable them to secure as well as extend their conquests, and to charm even when the lilies and roses are all withered. If the poem should effect this very laudable purpose, the Virtues, the Muses, and the Graces, should unite to form a wreath for the poet's brow, and hail him as the restorer of a golden age. While every mother, wife, and daughter aspires at the virtues of a Serena, let Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone be confined in chains to the infernal regions, and forbidden ever more to arise and assume the shape of a British lady!

NO. CXXI.—ON THE MORAL EFFECTS OF A GOOD TRAGEDY.

It is with regret I observe, that a taste for the noblest part of theatrical amusements, the representation of tragedy, is rather on the decline. It strongly marks the frivolity of an age, when the buskin is excluded for the sock, and the public attention too much engaged by dancers, singers, and harlequins, to admit the serious, yet lively and affecting pleasures of the tragic muse.

There seems to me, to be no method more effectual of softening the ferocity, and improving the minds of the lower classes of a great capital, than the frequent exhibition of tragical pieces, in which the distress is carried to the highest extreme, and the moral at once self-evident, impressive, and instructive. The multitudes of those who cannot read, or, if they could, have neither time nor abilities for deriving much advantage from reading, are powerfully impressed, through the medium of the eyes and ears, with those important truths, which, while they illuminate the understanding, correct and mollify the heart. Benevolence, justice, heroism, and the wisdom of moderating the passions, are plainly pointed out, and forcibly recommended to those savage sons of uncultivated nature, who have few opportunities, and would have no inclination for instruction, if it did not present itself under the form of a delightful amusement. The human heart in general, whether it beats in the bosom of him who has been improved by education, or of the neglected child of poverty, is taught to exercise some of its most amiable propensities by the indulgence of commiseration in scenes of fancied woe. Were the theatre under certain regula-

tions, a man might go to it as he goes to church, to learn his duty; and it might justly be honoured with the appellation which it has often assumed, and be called the School of Virtue.

There are certainly a thousand tragedies of more classical merit, but few better calculated to save the numerous and important classes of the plebeian order from wallowing in vice, theft, intemperance, and wretchedness of every kind, than the tragedy of George Barnwell. Common and illiterate minds cannot follow the high flights of sublime poetry, nor understand the beauties of blank verse; but the language of Lillo, in this humble tale, is level to the lowest degree of intellect. It must, indeed, give pleasure to every friend of unassuming merit, to find the due tribute of applause paid to the modest Lillo by Harris, who, though not destitute of pedantic affectation, was certainly a good critic after the Grecian model. He has not hesitated to place the Fatal Curiosity in the very first rank of dramatic compositions. And George Barnwell, however it may be affectedly despised by the silly votaries of fashion, who abominate it as low, deserves no less to be esteemed for its moral excellence, than the other for its classical. It has, perhaps, saved as many from an ignominious end as the Beggar's Opera has hastened to it. That any moralist, or man of observation, can entertain a doubt concerning the effect on the upper gallery, of a play in which thieves and harlots are represented as amiable and innocent characters, and all the rest of society as rogues, evinces, in this instance, an ignorance of human nature. The representation of the Beggar's Opera, is not only an outrage on civilised society, but an extreme act of cruelty to those wretched boys and girls, who have been allured to the paths of destruction, by viewing them thus strewed with

artificial flowers.—Take away the disgrace, the shame, and the first fine sensibilities of timid vice, and you remove a restraint, the force of whose operation neither precepts nor laws can ever supply. Suppose a country lad, with all his native modesty about him, but possessing great natural sharpness, allured to the theatre by the Beggar's Opera. In a few hours he undergoes a perfect metamorphosis. He thinks himself illuminated, and despises the honest old folks at home, who have hitherto confined him, as he supposes, in childish ignorance. His perverted ambition takes an unfortunate turn; and if he arrives not at the honour of dying like a Macheath, he will at least endeavour to deserve it. Such, I am well assured, is often a true case; but even the miserable creatures, who are far gone in the paths which lead through villany to ruin, may be called back by the melancholy tale of poor George Barnwell. There are many other tragedies in the English language which convey admirable morals to the lower classes as well as the higher, and have undoubtedly rescued many a wretch, who was deaf to a parent's voice, and a preacher's admonition, from the dominion of their evil passions and habits.

But, indeed, there is no class of the people, however refined and polished, which may not receive such benefits from a well-written tragedy, as scarcely any other mode of instruction can afford. He who has entered into all the feelings of a Shakespeare, an Otway, or a Rowe, may be said to have assimilated with their souls, and snatched a sacred spark, which cannot fail to kindle something in himself resembling the ethereal fire of true genius. His nature will be improved, and a species of wisdom and elevation of spirit, which was in vain sought for in academic groves, may at last be imbibed in the theatres. Philosophy may catch a warmth of the

drama, which is capable of advancing it to nobler heights than she would otherwise have attained. Socrates, whose benevolence and wisdom appeared to have something of divinity, became the voluntary assistant of Euripides in the composition of his tragedies; and undoubtedly was of opinion, that he taught philosophy to instruct the herd of mankind in the most effectual manner, when he introduced her to their notice in the buskin.

Instructive, entertaining, animating, and ennobling, as is the spirit of the tragic muse, is it not wonderful that many can slight its efficacy, or view its fine productions on the stage with perfect insensibility? Yet, he who surveys the seats in the theatre, will find many who appear to view a Lear, a Shore, a Hamlet, and a harlequin, with the same heavy eye; nor show one emotion, except it be of laughter, while nature is most powerfully drawing streams from the sacred fountain of tears, wherever it has not been closed by affectation, by a natural or an acquired stupidity. It seems, indeed, to be a part of the contemptible vanity, which characterizes the age, to laugh at public spectacles when others are serious, and to be serious when others laugh.—"Who, indeed," says the affected votary of *fashion*, "would be sincerely affected by any thing said or done by the low creatures on the stage, or enjoyed by the vulgar people in the pit and gallery?"

Some spectators, on the other hand, lose all the effect of the piece by attending to the identical men and women who act, rather than to the characters which they represent. They also admire a favourite performer's coat, gown, cap, shoe, leg, or hand, but forget the hero and the heroine, the poet and the poem.

The taste for ridicule, which greatly prevails in a

mean, selfish, debauched, and trifling age, contributes to prevent the genuine effect of tragedy. Great laughers are seldom susceptible of deep or serious impressions. While the dead lie scattered on the stage, and every thing is presented to the view which ought to excite pity and terror, the joker dissipates the sweet sorrow of sympathy by the introduction of a ludicrous idea. Ridicule, indeed, seems to become a weapon in the hands of the wicked, destructive of taste and feeling, as well as of morality and religion.

The addition of a ludicrous epilogue, a farce, a pantomime entertainment, and of dances between the acts, has often been lamented as destructive of the moral effects of the finest tragedy. It is true, that they who live to please, must please in order to live; and therefore the players and their managers are not culpable. They must not only provide manly amusements for men, but childish diversions for silly triflers, for children, and for school-boys. These entertainments have, indeed, often that ingenuity and drollery in them, which may, at a proper season, relax the most rigid philosophy. I censure not the things themselves, but the time of their introduction. After the soul has been deeply impressed with serious and virtuous sentiments, it is surely lamentable that every stamp should be effaced by harlequins and buffoons. It must be remembered, that I am speaking only of the moral effects of the drama; and I believe every one will agree, that these would be more successfully produced if the entertainment, as it is called by way of eminence, preceded the tragedy. The spectator would then retire to his pillow with his fancy full of fine poetic images, and his heart glowing with every elevated idea of moral rectitude. But now his feelings are so trifled with and tantalized, that at last he grows

callous to the tenderest pathos, and frequents the theatre merely as a critic in acting, instead of an interested partaker in the scenes which pass in review, and which were calculated to impress a love of virtue and an abhorrence of all kinds of vice.

Every mode of improving the hearts of the community at large in the serious and severer virtues, ought to be applied with diligence. The theatre opens a fine school for the accomplishment of this end; and it would certainly contribute greatly to accelerate the general improvement, if there were less singing, dancing, and buffoonery, and more tragedy. But some fashionable man must set the example of admiring it, or else all the muses themselves might rack their inventions in composing the melancholy tale, with no other effect than that of diffusing sleep or smiles among the higher orders.

It is remarkable, that soon after this paper was published, tragedy became fashionable. The fashion, however, was but transient; it wanted the support of court favour; and poor Tragedy was laughed off from the stage by Farce.

NO. CXXII.—ON THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS, AS A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION, ON THE STATE OF LITERATURE.

It is a mark of the social and public spirit of this nation, that there is scarcely a member of it who does not bestow a very considerable portion of his time and thoughts in studying its political welfare, its interest, and its honour. Though this general taste for politics, from the highest to the lowest orders of the people, has afforded subjects for comic ridicule; yet I cannot help considering it both as a

proof of uncommon liberality, and as one of the firmest supports of civil liberty. It kindles and keeps alive an ardent love of freedom. It has hitherto preserved that glorious gift of God from the rude hand of tyranny, and tends, perhaps more than any other cause, to communicate the noble fire of true patriotism to the bosoms of posterity. While we watch vigilantly over every political measure, and communicate an alarm through the empire with a speed almost equal to the shock of electricity, there will be no danger that a king should establish despotism, even though he were to invade the rights of his people at the head of a standing army. There would be many a Leonidas to stand at the gates of Thermopylæ.

But as zeal without knowledge is subversive of the purpose which it means to promote; it becomes a true friend to his country, to endeavour to unite with the love of liberty the love of knowledge. It unfortunately happens, that political subjects are of so warm and animating a nature, that they not only appear to interest in a very high degree, but to engross the attention. The newspapers, corrupt as they now are, with only one or two exceptions, form the whole library of the politician; the coffee-house is his school: and he prefers an acrimonious pamphlet, for or against the ministry, to all that was ever written by a Homer, or discovered by a Newton.

To be a competent judge either of political measures or events, it is necessary to possess an enlightened understanding, and the liberal spirit of philosophy; it is necessary to have read history, and to have formed right ideas of the nature of man and of civil society. But I know not how it happens, the most ignorant and passionate are apt to be the most decisive in delivering their sentiments on the

very complicated subjects of political controversy. A man whose education never extended beyond writing and the four rules, will determine at once, and with the most authoritative air, such questions as would perplex the wisest statesman adorned with all human learning, and assisted by the experience and advice of the most cultivated persons in the nation. Even gentlemen, according to the common acceptation of that title, or those who have fortunes and have received the common instruction of the times, are seldom able to judge with propriety in politics, though they are usually inclined to dictate with passion. Is it possible that, from having learnt only the first elements of Latin and French, and the arts of dancing, fencing, and fiddling, a man should be qualified, I do not say to sit as a senator, but to expatiate, with sufficient judgement and intelligence, on the propriety and nature of important measures concerted by profound wisdom?

But even among persons whose minds are sufficiently improved to distinguish and pursue the good of man and of society, independently either of passion or of private advantage, the rage for politics often proceeds too far, and absorbs all other objects. In vain does the hand of art present the picture or repeat the melody of music; for the eye is blind, the ear is deaf, to all but the news and the newspaper. Poetry, philology, elegant and polite letters, in all their ramifications, display their alluring charms in vain to him whose head and heart still vibrate with the harsh and discordant sounds of a political dispute. Those books whose tendency is only to promote elegant pleasures or advance science, which flatter no party, and gratify no malignant passion, are suffered to fall into oblivion; while a pamphlet which espouses the cause of any political men or measures, however inconsiderable its li-

terary merit, is extolled as one of the first productions of modern literature. But meagre is the food furnished to the mind of man by the declamation of a party bigot. From a taste for trash, and a disrelish of the wholesome food of the mind, and from the consequent neglect of solid learning, mere politicians are prevented from receiving valuable improvement; and the community, together with literature, is at last deeply injured. For when learning is little respected, it will naturally decline; and that the mental darkness consequent on its decline leads to the establishment of despotism, every one who has surveyed the pictures of mankind, as portrayed by the pencil of history, will immediately acknowledge. What did Athens and Rome retain of their ancient dignity when their learning and their arts were no more? That the light of learning should ever again be extinguished, may appear a visionary idea to an Englishman; but so it did to a Roman in the days of Cicero. Notwithstanding the multiplication of books by the art of printing, both they and all value for them may vanish together with the power of understanding them, if the fury of politics should occasion a contempt for letters and for education, and convert the leaders of a people, or the people themselves, into Goths and Vandals.

He who would add an elegance to politics, and distinguish his conversation on the subject from the vociferation of porters in an alehouse, should inspect the finished pieces of antiquity, and learn to view public acts and counsels in the light in which they appeared to philosophers, to those whom the world has long considered the best teachers of political wisdom. Let him study such authors as Thucydides and Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch, Livy and Sallust. Politics will assume new grace by communicating with history and philosophy;

and political conversation, instead of a vague, passionate, and declamatory effusion of undigested ideas, will become a most liberal exercise of the faculties, and form a mental banquet, at which the best and wisest of mankind might indulge their finer appetites with insatiable avidity. What can constitute a more rational object of contemplation than the noble fabric of society, civilised by arts, letters, and religion? What can better employ our sagacity, than to devise modes, with the liberality of a philosophical patriotism, for its improvement and preservation?

Not only the understanding, the taste, the temper of a people, but the spirit also, will be greatly improved by learning politics of the Greeks and Romans. No man of feeling ever yet read Livy without learning to detest meanness and slavery, and to glow with a love of liberty and an emulation of public virtue. The Greek and Roman spirit cannot be too much encouraged by those who have a just idea of the dignity of a true Englishman, and desire to maintain it. And let it be remembered, that the Athenians, in their most glorious periods, were as much attached to politics and news as Britons ever were; but that they preserved, amidst the warmest contest, a refined taste and delicate passion for the politest learning and the profoundest philosophy.

NO. CXXIII.—ON BUFFOONERY IN CONVERSATION.

It is sweet, says the agreeable poet of Venusium, sometimes to lay aside our wisdom, and to indulge, on proper occasions, a species of temporary folly. He, indeed, must be outrageously severe who would prohibit any pleasing mode of passing our leisure

hours, while it is consistent with innocence, and the nature of a being eminently distinguished by the fine faculties of reason, fancy, memory, and reflection. Charming is the social hour when solidity of judgement is enlivened by brilliancy of wit, and the lively sallies of imagination by a sweet interchange of pensive gravity. Ease, freedom, and the unstudied effusion of the sentiments which naturally arise in cultivated minds, form a very delightful recreation, and dismiss the mind to its serious employments with new alacrity. Those among the ancients who were most celebrated for their wisdom, were remarkable for a cheerful and equable gaiety, and often diverted themselves, in their intervals of severer meditation, with jests and drollery. Who more cheerful than the gentle Socrates? Who more delighted with a joke than the dignified Cicero? But, at the same time, they were equally capable of maintaining a regular conversation in all its gravity and elegance. The dialogues of Socrates, preserved by his eloquent disciples, breathe a wisdom approaching to divine; and Cicero's book *de Oratore*, is one of the noblest monuments of polished urbanity, as are many of his philosophical pieces of speculative wisdom.

But there sometimes prevails a taste for low and noisy mirth, which totally precludes all delicacy of sentiment, all exercise of reason and invention, and almost degrades us to the level of those ludicrous animals whom nature has rendered so wonderfully expert in the art of mimicry. Many persons, who imagine themselves remarkably endowed with humour, and the power of delighting whatever company they deign to bless with their presence, are apt to give their tongues a licence to wander without the reins of judgement; to affect uncommon expressions, attitudes, grimaces, and modes of ad-

dress and behaviour; and to imagine that oddity is humour, eccentricity and downright nonsense prodigiously droll, and rudeness infinitely entertaining. If the company are as foolish as the pretended wit, or, indeed, if they are very polite and good-natured, they seldom refuse the easy tribute of a laugh, either real or affected; and the joker, animated by his fancied encouragement, proceeds in his extravagant sallies, till his assumed folly approaches very nearly to real idiotism. In the mean time, as he draws the attention of the company on himself, and engrosses all the time and talk, he not only lowers himself, but prevents others from rising; relaxes the tone of his own mind, and of all around, to a state of imbecility, and at once prevents the opportunity and the power of uttering a single idea worth remembrance. Noise and laughter are but meagre food for the mind; and however pleased people may appear, they commonly retire from the company in which these have formed the only entertainment with an unsatisfied and uneasy vacuity, and sometimes with disgust and disagreeable reflection.

It very often happens, that these facetious gentlemen who affect buffoonery, rely upon more expeditious methods of becoming *prodigiously entertaining*, than any thing which requires utterance. They enter a room, and sit down gravely, with their wigs on one side, or with the back part of it over their forehead. They take great delight in the practical joke; and if they can pick your pocket of your handkerchief, smut your face, draw your chair from under you, or make you a fool, as they call it, they consider themselves as other Yoricks, and as fellows of infinite humour, endowed with peculiar talents for setting the table on a roar. It might, indeed, be said with truth, that they literally make fools of themselves, and appear ambitious of supply-

ing that order which was once very common, but is now either a little out of fashion or introduced in disguise; I mean the order of professed and hireling fools, purposely maintained for the amusement of the rich and noble. It has, indeed, been jocularly said, that many in the present age execute the office in their own persons to save expense.

Now, though there is certainly nothing criminal in buffoonery, yet as it tends, when too long continued, to exclude all attention to any thing serious, and to divest conversation of its power of affording improvement as well as pleasure, it is certainly to be wished that it were, in some measure, restrained. I say restrained only; for I do not know any just reason why any method of innocently amusing the mind, during a short interval of inaction, should be utterly forbidden. Man is an animal that delights in variety; and mirth and mimicry, jest and jollity, *quips and cranks, and wanton wiles, and laughter holding both his sides*, are certainly no less allowable as the means of relaxation, than cards or backgammon. He is wise who requires moderation in all indulgencies; but he who inveighs against any innocent ones in the gross, and without exception, has taken a false estimate of human nature, and is not to be considered as a moralist, but as a declaimer. If any one rule will admit of universal application, it is that which directs us to observe the golden mean.

I could never admire the wisdom of certain self-elected legislators of graceful behaviour, who seem to forbid us to laugh, with much greater strictness than they would have prohibited the violation of the decalogue. To be remarkable for laughing on trifling occasions or without occasion, is not only ungraceful, but a sign of folly. But God has distin-

guished man by the power of risibility, and there is no reason why he should not exercise it; and, perhaps, there would be no time more proper, than when a disciplined fop shows, by his behaviour, that he prefers the varnish of external grace to honour and to honesty.

Wit, it has been said, does not naturally excite laughter. But this observation, though true in part, is not universally true; for wit, united with humour, possesses such a command of the risible muscles, that he must be a stoic, or a very ill-natured man, who is able to resist the impulse. I should, indeed, have no favourable opinion of that man's heart or disposition, who could be present at a truly comic scene, without laying aside his severity, and shaking his sides with as much glee as the ingenuous child of nature. And if it is a weakness not to be able to refrain from laughter at a ludicrous object, it is a weakness of all others the most pardonable; and it is surely better to be even weak than malignant or sulky. But, in truth, the weakness consists only in laughing immoderately, or frequently without an adequate object.

In every convivial meeting of elegant and polished company, the Muses and the Graces should be of the party. The first honours and attention should be paid to them; but let not Comus and Jocus be forbidden to follow in their train, and under their command. The entertainment will be thus heightened and various, and good sense and decorum derive new lustre from good humour. We might, indeed, wish to restrain the excessive and rude mirth which originates in levity and folly, and becomes what is called buffoonery; but far be it from us to banish that sprightliness which naturally results from the gaiety of innocence. Joy, while we are

blessed with health and ease, and what the stoics call Euroia, or the well flowing of the stream of life, is gratitude and obedience.

NO. CXXIV.—ON THE STYLE OF XENOPHON AND PLATO.

Writers who have displayed any of that uniform peculiarity in their style which renders it easily imitable, however popular they may become at their first appearance, by gratifying the passion for novelty, are by no means the most perfect writers; but are to be classed with those artists of the pencil, whom the painters distinguish by the appellation of Mannerists. Simplicity of diction, as it is one of the most engaging beauties, is also one of the most difficult to imitate. It exhibits no prominency of feature, but displays one whole, properly embellished with a thousand little graces, no one of which obtrudes itself in such a manner as to destroy the appearance of a perfect symmetry. In this species of excellence, Xenophon is confessedly a model. He has been called the Attic Muse and the Attic Bee. It has been said, that the Muses would express themselves in his language, that his style is sweeter than honey, that the Graces themselves appear to have assisted in its formation; but though all this praise is justly due, yet it would be difficult to point out any one beauty which recurs so often in the same form as to characterize his composition.

But the numerous writers who have imitated the Rambler or the Adventurer, are discovered in their affectation before the reader has perused a single

page. The very peculiar manner of those excellent performances has been easily imitated by inferior writers, and more easily caricatured. Addison is simple and natural, and, consequently, has not often been mimicked with equal success. Indeed, the nearer we approach to the manner of Addison, the more agreeable is our style; but, I believe, none ever admired the style of the Rambler but in the hands of its original author. The satirical writer of Lexiphanes easily rendered it ridiculous; and though, in some of Aiken's prosaic pieces, there is a very serious and good imitation of it, yet we are rather disposed to smile than admire. Affectation always borders on burlesque; but a manner, which derives its graces from nature, cannot be rendered ridiculous. The style of Xenophon, like the philosopher whom he records, is proof against the sportive and malignant buffoonery of an Aristophanes.

It is, however, certain, that every beauty cannot be combined under one form. If the style of Xenophon displays grace, ease, and sweetness, it is deficient in magnificence, in weight, in authority, and in dignity. But it should be remembered, that the Venus of Medici is not to be censured because it wants the nerves and muscles of the Farnesian Hercules. It appears to me, however, that though some of the most popular writers of England yield to Xenophon in the softer graces, they greatly excel him in masculine beauty. The authors of the Rambler, of the Adventurer, and some of their imitators, will be found to possess a superiority in this respect, on a fair comparison. Indeed, if there were more singularities and deviations from simplicity than are to be found in those volumes, their excellent sense and fine morality ought to exalt

their authors to a degree of honour far superior to any which can be derived from a skill in composition.

According to the opinions of the best judges, ancient and modern, the greatest master of the beauties of style whom the world ever saw, was the divine Plato. The ancients hesitated not to assert, in the zeal of their admiration, that if Jupiter were to speak in the language of Greece, he would infallibly express himself in the diction of Plato. He possessed the art of combining austerity with grace, and sweetness with grandeur; and to him we owe a similar combination in the great orator and philosopher of Rome, who formed his style on the model of Plato, and has given us a resemblance scarcely less exact than that of the bust to its mould, or the waxen seal to the sculptured gem.

The introductions to the dialogues of Cicero are always peculiarly beautiful; so also are those of Plato. It is agreeable to call to mind the sweet spot which Plato represents as the place where his dialogues passed, in language no less delightful than the scene.

The river Ilissus glided over the pebbles in a clear stream, so shallow that you might have walked through it without any great inconvenience. At a small distance rose a tall plane-tree, spreading its broad foliage to a considerable distance, and flourishing in all the mature luxuriance of summer beauty. At the root of the tree issued a spring, dedicated to Achelous and the Nymphs, and remarkable for its cool and limpid water. The softest herbage grew round its little banks, the verdure of which was rendered perpetual by the refreshing moisture of the spring, as it flowed down a gentle declivity. A sweet and cooling breeze generally breathed along the shade, and great numbers of *ci-*

cadæ, taking shelter from the sun, resorted to the coverts, and made, with their little chirpings, an agreeable kind of natural music. Plato adds several other agreeable heightenings of the scene, where moral and philosophical beauty was taught to emulate the surrounding beauties of nature. The language of Plato adds charms to the whole, as variegated colours illuminate and embellish the plain sketches of the penciled outline.

It is no wonder that philosophy, recommended by such graces as these, was found to render her votaries enamoured. Virtue and public spirit can scarcely ever want their admirers and followers, when they are decorated in a manner which sets off their own loveliness to the greatest advantage. It is to be lamented, for the sake of virtue, that lord Shaftsbury was a sceptic. His style was a fine imitation of Plato, and displays such beauties as might conceal the ugliness of a deformed system. Mr. Harris has also exhibited some of the Platonic graces; and I cannot help considering it as a mark of defective taste that he is not more popular. His style, where it successfully imitates Plato, appears to be one of the most elegant, classical, and judiciously ornamented among all the English writers of the present century. They who have raised their taste so as to perceive its beauties, will consider the style of many writers whom they once admired, as comparatively barbarous. He who never tasted the pine-apple, the peach, and the nectarine, may probably suppose that he enjoys the most exquisite flavour of the fruit-garden while he is feasting on a pippin; as he, who never partook of the pippin, may devour a crab, and admire it as a delicacy.

A critic of antiquity, Dionysius the Halicarnassian, has discovered many and great faults in the style of Plato. He seems to think the epithets too

poetical, the metaphors too bold, the matter too allegorical. Pompey the Great disputed the point with him; and there is a curious letter extant on the subject, from the critic to the statesman. It is, indeed, obvious to remark, that though Plato would not admit Homer into his republic, he has admitted many of his beauties into his style; and has often written with an enthusiastic warmth, which they who have not partaken of the *afflatus* to which he somewhere pretended, cannot entirely approve. A cold critic, like Dionysius, would naturally be disgusted with it; but we cannot listen to his censures of a noble genius, who snatched graces beyond the reach of art, whom Pompey approved, and whom Tully almost idolized. When specimens of perfect composition were to be pointed out, the choice has fallen on the Georgics of Virgil, and the Menexenus of Plato.

Both Xenophon and Plato display what is more valuable than all verbal elegance, a fine system of morality, which long diffused over the world a light unequalled, till the sun of revelation arose. If Xenophon's memoirs were divested of a few superfluities and a few absurdities, I should not fear to assert, that they approach very nearly to the Gospel, in the exhibition of instructive lessons, and a sublime, yet encouraging example, of all human excellence; for, with respect to the calumnies advanced against Socrates, they undoubtedly originated from the father of lies. And those writers are to be esteemed the enemies to human virtue and happiness, who employ their ingenuity in detracting from illustrious and established reputation, like his who taught the lessons of reason and virtue, and practised what he taught, and sealed it by death.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S ...

NO. CXXV.—ON THE ADVANTAGES DERIVABLE FROM NATIONAL ADVERSITY.

It is very certain that national prosperity, as it is comprehended in the idea of numerous fleets and armies, of extensive empire, large revenues, advantageous commerce, and a profusion of money in specie, is a kind of good by no means necessarily connected with moral good, or with the substantial happiness of individuals. It makes a splendid figure in imagination's eye; but to reason, it appears in a very questionable shape, and experience is able to evince, that it has always diffused profligacy and misery through the walks of private life; and, by introducing luxury, licentiousness, indolence, and corruption, has at once injured all that can render human nature dignified and happy, and precipitated the decline and the downfal of empires while triumphing in fancied glory.

It has been observed, that the bodies politic and natural bear to each other a remarkable analogy. A human form pampered, bloated, and plethoric, will often have the appearance of strength, as well as magnitude; though no state of it can be less adapted to facilitate the animal movements, or in greater danger of a hasty dissolution. The body politic also loses in muscular force, as much as it acquires of unwieldly size, till, by the gradual decrease of vigour and augmentation of weight, it totters on its baseless supports, and, at last, lies level in the dust with Babylon and ancient Rome. Luxury, the inevitable consequence of what is falsely called national prosperity, becomes the grave of empires, and of all that could adorn them, or render their long duration an object of rational desire.

There is, undoubtedly, a certain degree of mag-

nitude, at which when a state is arrived, it must of necessity undergo the alternative, of being purged of its peccant humours, or falling into a nerveless languor and consequent decline. Perhaps our own country has already arrived at that degree, and is now, under the operation of Divine Providence, suffering the amputation of its morbid excrescences for the salvation of its health and existence. It may lose some of its revenues; but it may save and meliorate its morals and its liberty. Ministers may be shaken from their seats, pensioners and placemen may be reduced to despair, funds may be annihilated, and estates brought down to their natural value; but freedom, but virtue, but industry, but the British constitution, but human nature shall survive the wreck, and emerge, like silver and gold when tried by the fire, with new value and unsullied lustre. After a state of political adversity, something may take place in society similar to the expected renovation of all things consequent to a general conflagration of the universe.

Distress and difficulty are known to operate in private life as the spurs of diligence. Powers, which would for ever have lain dormant in the halcyon days of ease and plenty, have been called forth by adversity, and advanced their possessor to the most enviable heights of virtue, happiness, and glory. Man is naturally indolent, and, when undisturbed, will bask and sleep in the sunshine till the sleep of death; but, when roused by the blast and the thunder, he rises, strains every sinew, and marches on to enterprise and success. Success will almost infallibly attend great exertions uniformly and resolutely continued; so that what began in misery ends in triumph, as the sun which rose in a mist descends with serenity, and paints the whole horizon with gold and purple.

Public industry may be excited in the same manner, and in the same degree, by public misfortunes. The nation is impoverished, or, in other words, its superfluities are retrenched. It is an event devoutly to be wished. Luxury, with ten thousand evils in her train, is obliged to withdraw, and the humble virtues, whom she had driven by her insolence into exile, cheerfully advance from their concealment. Industry and frugality take the lead; but to what a degree of vigour must every muscle of the body politic be braced, when every member is, in some measure, actuated by industry and frugality. No man ever yet exerted himself during life to the utmost of his strength; nor is it on record, that any state was ever yet so exhausted, but that, while it enjoyed liberty, it might draw new resources from its own vitals. Though the tree is lopped, yet so long as the root remains unhurt, it will throw out a greater luxuriancy of branches, produce fruit of better flavour, and derive fresh vigour from the axe. If one has accidentally disturbed an ant-hill, or broken the fabric of the hive, though the little animals appeared before to have exerted their utmost efforts, yet it is amazing with what additional diligence they apply themselves to repair the depredation. Not a moment is allowed for despondency. The earth and the air glow with motion, and the misfortune seems immediately to add to their spirits, and ultimately both to their store and security.

The beautiful description which Virgil has given us of the busy scene in which the Tyrians are engaged in building Carthage, represents, in a most lively manner, the alacrity with which human creatures are found to exert themselves when instigated by the stimulus of necessity. An emulation of labour seizes every bosom. No murmuring, no com-

plainings in the street, but every one feels himself happy in proportion as he renders himself useful. Men's abilities rise with the occasion; and political evil, like other evil, under the conduct of a merciful Deity, has produced extensive good, by calling forth some of the noblest exertions and most perfect characters which have adorned the records of human nature.

There is one beneficial effect of national adversity, of greater importance than any which I have enumerated. It subdues the haughty soul, elevated with riches, and inebriated with excess, and turns the attention to the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who from his throne beholds all nations, and bids the sceptre to depart from the wicked to the righteous. It teaches us to rely less upon our foreign auxiliaries, our musquets, our mortars, our cannon, our copper-bottomed men-of-war, our generals, and our admirals, than on the Lord of hosts.

When he fights for us we shall conquer. Without him, we shall in vain put our trust in princes; but "the ball of empire may continue to roll on westward as it has ever yet done, till it stops in America, a world unknown to the ancients, and which may save the tears of some future Alexander."

If Providence shall ever decree the downfal of British supremacy, happy should I be to have suggested one idea which may stimulate the exertions of my countrymen, once more to raise the noble column on the basis of liberty and virtue; or which may console them on its ruins, and teach them, while they sit by the waters of affliction, and hang their harps on the willow, to think of Him who can cause rivers of comfort to flow in the dreary desert.

NO. CXXVI.—ON SOME OF THE FALSE PRETENSIONS AND IMPOSITIONS OF THE ARTFUL AND AVARICIOUS.

Notwithstanding the pretensions of religion, philosophy, and education, the greater part of mankind appears to be restrained in their actual conduct by few efficient principles but those which are dictated by a regard to sordid or ambitious interest. To the love of gain, and the weakness or want of principles, it must be imputed, that every occupation and department of life abounds with imposture. A masque is easily put on. Appearances are, indeed, far more easily assumed than realities; and they are often more successful and more plausible; for the edifice of one who employs all his time and attention in gilding, painting, and carving the front, will much sooner attract the notice and applause of the passenger, than that of another who has been solicitous only in securing the strength of the beam, and the massy firmness of a deep foundation.

So powerful are the instigations of avarice, and so easy is it to deceive the young, the simple, the innocent, and unsuspecting, that the intercourse among mankind would have been one uniform commerce of deceit, if it had not fortunately happened, that the same want of principle and superfluity of selfishness, which led the deceivers to impose upon mankind, induce them also to betray the arts of each other. Rival cheats, in the fury of jealous competition, have discovered the secrets of the juggling art, and opened the eyes of the deluded observers.

But as there is always a rising generation unacquainted with the snares of the deceitful, nets and traps are still laid wherever there is a probability of prey. It becomes those, then, who have seen many

of the arts of life, to let others profit by their experience, and prevent the generous game from falling into the wires of the mercenary poacher.

It may be prescribed as a rule which will not often fail in the application, that where extraordinary pretensions are made, either in the manual arts, the trades, or the professions, there is just ground for caution and suspicion. Solid merit and real excellence of every kind, usually confide in their own power of recommending themselves; while ignorance, and superficial skill, naturally endeavour to ensnare by cunning what they cannot earn by desert. There is a delicacy and spirit attendant on real worth and ingenuity, which had rather be without success, than attain it by artifice and arrogant pretension.

The prudent and experienced are generally on their guard against those numerous adventurers, who rely for success on advertisements in the public papers. If there is any difference between the mercer, haberdasher, or wine-merchant who advertises his goods, and him who does not, it is, that the advertiser sells at a dearer price a worse commodity. His shop is a kind of trap, the bait is pretended cheapness; and many a young bird is caught with the chaff of a bargain. A wise man will take care not to lay out his money when things are to be sold at prime cost, and under prime cost, and twenty *per cent* cheaper than the rest of the trade. Beware of those generous spirits who sell their property, or their industry, *pro publico bono;* beware, as you value your health and your life, of those who will cure you of all diseases with a shilling pill-box; beware of being poisoned by the vintner, who promises you neat as imported; beware of your purse and your credulity, when you are offered to be taught more of the languages and sciences by a new me-

thod, in six months, six weeks, or six hours, than those who preside over the most approved schools can teach in six or sixteen years. Beware of a thousand artful tricks which are displayed in the newspapers, and which the deceitful heart of man contrives, as the spider weaves his web, to catch those who are unsuspecting, because they are innocent. The true meaning of all pompous pretences and inviting advertisements, is, that their authors being distressed, and, probably, destitute both of character, friends, and merit, find an easy mode of supplying the defect, by digging pitfalls for the unwary, with whom the world must always abound, at the expense of a few shillings in setting each snare. Such, indeed, is the credulity of mankind, that many a quack and pretender has possessed an estate in the corner of a newspaper, equal to large freeholds of dirty acres.

There are few departments in which more instances of deception occur, than in the lower walks of literature. It happens that they who are to be mechanically instrumental in disseminating science and philosophy, and all the productions of human wit, constitute a very numerous body, consisting of many members in extreme indigence, from the author by trade, down to the bookbinder and the devil. Employment must be provided for them all, or both they and their families must want bread. The press must, therefore, be constantly in motion; but what is to supply it? A very few presses would be sufficient to prepare for the public view all productions really new and necessary. Compilations are formed under a thousand shapes and disguises: and men of straw, adorned with Doctors' degrees, and the dignity of Fellows of the Royal Society, are created by the fiat of the adventurous publisher, and stand forth as the renowned authors, in all the

dignity of a title-page. From these powerful men in buckram issue Grand and Imperial Bibles, new Systems of Geography, Histories of England, and Collections of Voyages, with a permission to read the first number, and return it if not approved, and a promissory note, generously engaging that all numbers, exceeding a certain amount, shall be given *gratis*. But if any deceit can be excused, perhaps it is such an one as this, which feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and communicates much entertaining and useful knowledge among the poor.

There are those who call far less honest arts than these, innocent frauds; but it is well remarked by a very sound moralist, that no frauds are innocent; because they destroy the confidence of society, on which our happiness and convenience in every part of our intercourse with each other, greatly depend. I will venture to add, that he who will cheat without remorse in one thing, will cheat in another whenever he can do it with equal secrecy and impunity. Though tricks in trade, or the deceitful mysteries of a profession, may enable a man to raise a capital house of business, to be in a great way, or to become a good man, as the phrases are in the city; yet they can never be compatible with common honesty, nor render him more truly respectable than the humble adventurer who actually invades your purse by rifling your pocket.

NO. CXXVII.—ON THE PREVAILING TASTE IN POETRY.

SWEET poesy! thou loveliest object of intellectual pursuit—But I am running into raptures, when I intended a dissertation. It is, indeed, difficult not

to be transported beyond the limits of criticism, in contemplating the beauties which the magic hand of the poet raises around, with all the creative power of a real enchantment. From the cares of gain, the toils of ambition, the noise, the hurry, the vexation of a disordered world, we rise on the wings of poesy to ethereal regions, where all is sublime and tranquil; or are wafted to visionary scenes, in which are displayed all the delicious sweets of a paradise and an elysium. Away, ye sordid objects; ye pollutions and incumbrances of the pure spirit! Man is not tied down to you. Providence, in compassion to wretched mortals, has given them a power of forsaking this low orb, and soaring a while, all mind, all spirit, all ecstasy, in the car of the swan, or on the wings of the eagle.

Reason alone, with all her pretensions, is seldom sufficient to soothe our cares, and compose our passions; but melody and fancy united with her, are capable of pouring balm into the wounded heart. In all nations, and in all ranks of the people, some species of poetry has been cultivated; and a taste for it was undoubtedly implanted in our nature, that the sore evils of reality might be alleviated by the sweets of fiction. When Pandora's box was opened on mankind, and misery diffused on every side, fancy as well as hope kindly lingered for our consolation.

While we are tracing the love of song from the favoured isles of the Southern Ocean to the regions of Iceland, we are naturally tempted to dwell, with particular attention, on the poetical taste of our own country and our own times.

I think it is not difficult to perceive, that the admirers of English poetry are divided into two parties. The objects of their love are, perhaps, of equal beauty, though they greatly differ in their air,

their dress, the turn of their features, and their complexion. On one side, are the lovers and imitators of Spenser and Milton; and on the other, those of Dryden, Boileau, and Pope.

Now it happens, unfortunately, that those who are in love with one of these forms are, sometimes, so blind to the charms of the other, as to dispute their existence. The author of the Essay on Pope, who was himself a very agreeable poet in the class of *mediocrists*, and of what I call the old school of English poetry, seems to deny the justice of Mr. Pope's claim to the title of a true poet, and to appropriate to him the subordinate character of a satirical versifier. On the other hand, the authors of the Traveller, and of the Lives of the English Poets, hesitate not to strip the laurels from the brow of the lyric Gray.

Goldsmith, in his Life of Parnell, has invidiously compared the Night Piece on Death to Gray's Elegy; and, in a manner which betrays a little jealousy of a living poet's fame, given the preference to Parnell. There is also a severe censure thrown on the Elegy of Gray, in a collection which Goldsmith published under the title of the beauties of English Poetry. I remember to have heard Goldsmith converse, when I was very young, on several subjects of literature, and make some oblique and severe reflections on the fashionable poetry. I became a convert to his opinion, because I revered his authority. I took up the Odes of Gray with unfavourable prepossessions, and in writing my remarks on them, joined in the censure. I have since read them with great delight; and on comparing their style, and even their obscurity, with many of the finest pieces of lyric composition in all antiquity, I find a very great resemblance. I am not ashamed to retract my former opinion, and to pay the tribute of ap-

plause to those elegant friends, Gray and Mason. At the same time, while it is as easy to discern that they differ greatly from the school of Dryden and Pope, it is no derogation from their merit to assert, that they are the genuine disciples of Spenser and Milton.

Goldsmith's Traveller is certainly a beautiful poem, and so are Dr. Johnson's Imitations of Juvenal; but they, and a thousand others of the same species, are of a different stamp from the English antique. They are excellent productions in one kind; but not less so are those of Gray and Mason in another. Let both schools flourish and receive their due applause, nor let those who have only acquired a taste for one, treat the other with contempt. Spenser and Milton drew not from a Gothic model, but from the polished Italians, who, though they had lost some of the purity and simplicity of ancient Rome, yet retained much of her elegance. I cannot help thinking that his poetical ideas are confined, who has not observed with delight, the sweet lines, the sweet language, the sweet fancy of Spenser; and who has not been also charmed with some of the smaller pieces of Milton. All tastes, however various, allow Shakespeare's claim to poetry; but it cannot be denied, that some of his best descriptions, and especially those delicious morsels which occur in the form of songs or sonnets, partake much more of the ancient than of the modern school, either English or French; for we may call it English, if we attribute its origin to Pope, and French, if to Boileau.

There seems to be an unreasonable prejudice entertained against blank verse, by those who wish to dictate on the subjects of criticism. It is sufficient, in the idea of many, to condemn a poem, that it is written in blank verse. Though one may prefer rhyme upon the whole, yet, as blank verse is suscep-

tible of great variety of music, and of every ornament of diction, it is surely absurd to involve it in any general censure. It may, however, be attributed to this idle prepossession, that Mr. Mason's English Garden seems to be neglected. There is, indeed, a general prejudice against all works which appear to come from that school, and the very severe criticisms of the late biographical preface to the works of Gray will, perhaps, contribute to explode a most delightful style of pure poetry; of poetry conversant solely in the regions of fancy, and clothed in a luminous and musical diction appropriated to itself, and most remote from all that is prosaic. Very high commendations are due to Mr. Anstey, to the author of a poetical epistle to Sir William Chambers, to Mr. Hayley, and to several others who are well known to fame for their successful labours in the school of Pope; but, at least, an equal share of praise ought to be paid to the scholars of Milton and Spenser;—such as Mr. Mason, and the two Wartons. With respect to Gray, he has received his tribute of applause from a discerning public, and has certainly deserved it. The heart and the imagination have given it him: and they who can see no beauty in his verse, may perhaps succeed in writing a lampoon, but would probably fall far short of the poet whom they censure, in lyric and elegiac poetry.

None can entertain a higher veneration for our late prefatory biographer of the poets than myself, and I was therefore greatly concerned to see him exposed to censure by an uncandid, not to say an injudicious, piece of criticism on the poems of Gray. He indeed allows the merit of the elegy, but examines and censures the odes with every appearance of wanton malignity. Who but must lament that the severe

critic and moralist should have been so much under the influence of envy and jealousy, as to treat the fame of his contemporary, the illustrious Gray, with singular harshness, in a work which contains very candid accounts of a Sprat and a Yalden, a Duke and a Broome, and of others, with whom if Gray is compared, he will appear, as Shakespeare says, like Hyperion to a Satyr?

The late collection of poets has restored to temporary life many a sickly and dying poet, who was hastening to his proper place, the tomb of oblivion. Why was any more paper wasted on Dorset, Halifax, Stepney, Walsh, and Blackmore? How can a work pretend to the comprehensive title of the Body of English Poetry, in which the works of Spenser and Shakespeare are omitted to make room for such writers as King or Ambrose Philips? The writer of the prefaces throws the blame from himself on the compilers, whom he was not permitted, or did not endeavour, to control. A selection, formed under the direction of true taste, would have answered the two great ends of the publication, which it has now frustrated; it would have amply paid the booksellers, and reflected honour on English literature. Then should we have seen, in the place of Roscommon and Rochester, Pomfret and Fenton, the works of Goldsmith, of Glover, of Mason, of Aikin, of Carter, of Beattie, of the Wartons, of Anstey, and of many others, who would shine among the Hughes's, Pitts, and Savages, like the moon among the diminished constellations.

Upon the many and excellent living writers of poetry, we may observe, that though the distressful times of war and political animosity are unfavourable to the gentle arts of verse; yet the active and polished genius of this nation seems capable of sur-

mounting all obstacles in letters, as its manly spirit has often borne all before it in the unhappy contests of war.

NO. CXXVIII.—ON THE PECULIAR DANGER OF FALLING INTO INDOLENCE IN A LITERARY AND RETIRED LIFE.

It is certain, that as our ancestors were induced to found colleges by religious motives, so they chiefly intended them to answer the purposes of religion. Those pious benefactors to mankind did not mean to establish seminaries to prepare men for the world, but to teach them to despise it. But more enlightened periods than those in which these worthies lived, have discovered, that man best obeys his Maker when he takes an active part in the duties of society.

A long residence in a college, is, perhaps, scarcely less unfavourable to devotion than to social activity. For devotion depends chiefly on lively affections, exercised and agitated by the vicissitudes of hope and fear in the various transactions and events of human intercourse. He who is almost placed beyond the reach of fortune in the shelter of a cloister, may, indeed, be led by the statutes of the institution to attend his chapel, and doze over his cushion, but he will not feel, in any peculiar manner, the impulse of devotional fervour. The man who is engaged in the busy and honourable duties of active life, flies from the world to the altar for comfort and refreshment; but the cloistered recluse pants, while he is kneeling in all the formalities of religion, for the pleasures and employments of that world from which he is secluded. During several centuries, a great part of mankind was confined in mo-

nasteries, solely for the advancement of religion and learning; yet never was the earth more benighted than in those periods by bigotry and ignorance. Nor will any one assert, that, in subsequent times, the improvements in knowledge and religion have been, in any degree, proportioned to the numbers of those who have been separated from the world to facilitate their cultivation. The truth seems to be, that when the common incentives to industry are removed, and all the natural wants supplied without the necessity of exertion, man degenerates, as the pure waters of the river stagnate and become putrid in the pool. At last the boasting possessor of reason contents himself with dreaming "the blank of life along," with no other proofs of existence than the wants of animal nature. Take away love, ambition, and all the changes and chances of this mortal life, and man will be contented to eat, drink, sleep, and die.

Not in colleges alone, though they may be considered as the temples of indolence, but in common life also, the human mind becomes torpid, as the necessity of exertion is diminished. He, who confiding in the possession of a fortune for his happiness, avoids the avocations of a profession, and what he calls the fatiguing parts of study, will soon lose those powers of intellectual activity which he has not resolution to employ. He may gradually degenerate to a level with the irrational creation. He already, in some respects, approaches to the vegetable. And, indeed, when the habits are irretrievably confirmed, it might perhaps be happy, if his nature would permit him to become at last impassive and quiescent; but as spontaneous fermentation takes place in masses of putrefaction, so, in the mind which has ceased to be exercised by its own efforts, there will arise emotions and habits both

offensive and dangerous. Pride and envy, conceit and obstinacy, selfishness and sensuality, are among the ugly daughters of indolence in the monastic retreat.

It may appear paradoxical, but it is certainly an opinion authorised by experience, that an active life is the most friendly to contemplation. The fire of the mind, like culinary fire, has burned with a clear and constant flame, when open and ventilated by perpetual motion, as it has been smothered and extinguished in smoke, when suffered to remain long without disturbance. The best, and many of the most voluminous writers, acted still more than they wrote. What could be more unlike the life of the cloister than the lives of Xenophon, Julius Cæsar, Erasmus, and a thousand others, whose days were so engaged in negociation, in senates, in battles, in travelling, that it is not easy to conceive how they could find time, even to pen so great a quantity as they certainly composed. But such are the effects of assiduity, of an uninterrupted accumulation of efforts, that he who has been excited to restless activity by the spurs of honour, interest, and a generosity of nature, has frequently accomplished more by himself, than a thousand of his fellow-creatures employed in the same sphere, and furnished, by nature, with equal abilities for improvement. A hackney writer of catch-penny compilations, the editor of a newspaper, the maker of a magazine, will perform, in a few months, a portion of literary labour, which shall infinitely exceed that of whole colleges inhabited by those who slumber, or waste their activity on hounds and horses on the borders of the sedgy Cam and the slowly-winding Charwell.

But it avails little to point out the disorders of literary indolence, without endeavouring to suggest a remedy. It appears then to me, that those whom

Providence has blessed with leisure, and the opportunity of spending it in the pursuits of learning, and the liberal pleasures of retirement, too often languish in their pursuits, from neglecting to render them the subjects of debate and conversation. It is the warmth of discussion in free and social meetings which invigorates solitary study, and sends the scholar back to his books with fresh alacrity. The hope of making a figure in a subsequent conversation, the fear of a shameful exposure, and of appearing inferior to those who are, in a natural and civil view, our equals, will stimulate all our powers, and engage all our attention, while we sit in those very libraries where we once nodded and slumbered over the page of a Homer or a Cicero. Meetings should be established in all literary societies for the communication of remarks and the rehearsal of compositions. But the strictest rules should be prescribed and observed for the preservation of decorum, otherwise ridicule would gradually be introduced, and the feast of reason be converted either to a banquet of jollity, or a tumult of noise and nonsense.

It is right also, that contemplative men, however far removed from the necessity of employment by the favours of fortune, should communicate with mankind, not only in pleasures and amusements, but in real duties and active virtues, either conjugal, paternal, professional, official, or charitable. Something should be engaged in, with such obligations to performance, that an inclination to neglect should be over-ruled by legal compulsion, or the fear of certain loss and shame. The best method of avoiding the wretched state of not knowing what to do, is, to involve oneself in such circumstances as shall force one to do something, and something honourable and useful. The natural indolence of the human heart is found to escape every restraint but the

iron arm of necessity. Such is our present condition, that we must be often chained down to our real happiness and our best enjoyment.

And, with respect to the prevention of indolence in an academical life, it would certainly be a happy circumstance, if none were allowed to reside in an university above seven years, who were not actually engaged in the composition of a learned work, or in superintending the education of youth, as tutors, professors, and heads of colleges. A senior fellow, without any of these employments, is one of the unhappiest and least useful members of the community.

NO. CXXIX.—ON THE MANNERS OF A METROPOLIS.

WHATEVER may be the political advantages of a very populous capital, and I believe they are of a very disputable nature, the moral and physical evils of it are evidently numerous, and destructive of the human race. This observation is, indeed, true of all cities in which too great a proportion of the people is assembled; but I shall confine my present observations to the capital of the British empire.

The junction of Westminster with London, or of the court with the city, is very justly supposed to have a pernicious influence on both; on those who are engaged in the employments of commerce, and on those who are invited, from their paternal mansions, by the court and the senate-house. The courtier communicates to the citizen a love of pleasure, of dissipation, of vanity; and the citizen to the courtier, a veneration of opulence almost amounting to idolatry. The courtier introduces the vicissitudes of taste and fashion; the citizen imitates them, and furnishes, in profusion, the means of their display

and gratification. Thus are luxury, and all its consequent vices and miseries, advanced to as high a degree as they can reach, by the union of ingenuity to invent modes of indulgence, with wealth to supply the materials.

Lovers of pleasure in excess, are always lovers of themselves in the same degree ; and their love, with all the characteristical blindness of the passion, commonly injures its object. We shall therefore find selfishness prevailing in the metropolis, and producing all its natural effects of avarice, private gratifications, meanness, servility, and inhospitality. True patriotism and public spirit, though the very want of them will often cause the greatest pretensions to them, will seldom be found in the more numerous classes who inhabit the capital. Where money and pleasure are the sole objects of ardent pursuit, public virtue, and indeed all virtue, will be exposed to sale, whenever a purchaser can be found to pay the price. "Money, O ye citizens!" says Horace, in a satirical irony, "is first to be sought; and it is time enough to think of virtue, when you have secured a fortune."

The inhabitants of a great city will often be inhospitable and unneighbourly. Their attention is fixed on advancing and gratifying themselves, and they consider their neighbours as rivals, or at least as not worth cultivating, since they can always buy amusement at the numerous places of public resort and diversion. But in the country, mutual good offices take place, from a mutual desire and necessity of a friendly intercourse. The Londoner hardly knows the name of his next-door neighbour; and in accidents and distress, would as soon think of sending to Rome, as to the next door for comfort and assistance. But in any emergency in a village, every hand is ready to afford relief. Hospitality to

strangers still lingers in the distant country, but has long been banished from that region of avarice and selfish profusion, an overgrown city. Pay a visit in Sussex, in Devonshire, in Cornwall, in Wales, in the North, and compare your reception among strangers, with that which you meet with in London and Westminster. Luxury, avarice, and vice, have indeed a natural tendency to annihilate every generous principle, and to harden the heart against all connexions which do not promise to terminate in pleasure or in lucrative advantage.

The secrecy with which crimes can be committed in a crowd, is a powerful temptation. The Londoner may be involved in debauchery, and engaged in fraud, without being suspected at home, or in his neighbourhood. In the country, where individuals are all known, the fear of shame, and a principle of pride, often operate, when virtue, honour, and conscience would cease to restrain; for no one can there be guilty of an action remarkably dishonest or immoral without detection. A gentleman who should devote himself to the arts of the swindler, or the practices of the profligate debauchee, in a village or country town, would soon be compelled, by the hisses of infamy, to desert the place, or to live there in solitude. But in a city, even men adorned with the robes of magistracy may proceed, with little notice, in the most scandalous conduct, under the concealment of a crowd.

Weakness of body and weakness of understanding are often found to characterize the inhabitant of the capital. Luxury, want of air, want of sleep, excess in food, and in sensual indulgence, have a natural tendency to debilitate both the body and the mind. And if there were not continual supplies from the North, I know not whether the city would

not exhibit the human race in a most lamentable condition of imbecility, folly, distortion, and deformity. Compare the limbs of the volunteer soldiers in the metropolis with those of the rustic militia or regulars; compare the conduct and understanding of him who was born within the sound of Bow bell, and scarcely went beyond it, with those of the hardy native of Yorkshire or Scotland. Compare the willow with the oak.

The extremes of irreligion and enthusiasm mark the manners of the capital. These, indeed, are the natural consequences of some among the many bad dispositions already enumerated. Sunday is considered by the thrifty trader as a holiday, on which he may indulge without imprudence. It is therefore distinguished by many from the rest of the week, solely by excess, and by vicious indulgences. The parish churches are, with few exceptions, neglected; nor is there a great concourse to any place of worship, except where some enthusiast or hypocrite has opened a receptacle for those who labour under the symptoms of idiotism or insanity. The symptoms are often confirmed under this injudicious course, till they arrive at a degree of real and most melancholy madness.

I have pointed out some peculiar evils in the manners of the metropolis with two intentions. One is, to prevent, in some degree, the prevailing practice of emigrating from the country, from the seats of health and comparative innocence, to that sink of sin, and that grave of the human race, a city too crowded with people, and over-run with every abomination. The other is, to suggest a hint which may alleviate that part of the evil which admits a remedy. The love of money, of distinction, of pleasure, will probably frustrate the former purpose;

but the latter, in a day of national distress, or under other circumstances favourable to virtue, may possibly be accomplished.

To promote a reformation of manners, additional authority and efficiency must be given to the clergy and magistrates of London. Both of them are at this time looked upon by the vulgar, both high and low, with some degree of contempt. The churches are left to curates, or poor incumbents, who, in a place where riches are idolized, hold a rank scarcely equal to the keeper of an alehouse or an oil-shop. Are the London clergy, who labour strenuously in their vocation, and on whom so much of the state of morals and Christianity depends, particularly countenanced by the ministry or the bishops? It is parliamentary or borough interest which procures mitres, and stalls, and livings; and though a city curate, or incumbent, should convert millions from the error of their ways, he would still be suffered to elbow his way along Cheapside in his thread-bare coat and tattered gown; pointed out and laughed at by every apprentice mounted on his Sunday *Bit of Blood* and hastening to Hyde Park. The common people will not discriminate. They will despise religion and morals when they see the teachers of them poor, mean, and neglected.

Is it not injurious to the cause of religion, that a London clergyman, who has promoted every charity, and probably reformed great numbers, during thirty or forty years, shall be suffered to live and die with nothing but a curacy and a beggarly lectureship? and that, in the mean time, he who is related to a great man, or connected with members of parliament, though he never preached, and can hardly read, shall be loaded with dignities and pluralities? He who would reform the capital, I repeat, must render the clergy respectable in the eyes

of the vulgar, and the magistrates at once honourable and formidable.

NO. CXXX.—ON PHILELPHUS AND THEODORE GAZA, POLITE SCHOLARS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Though the admirer of elegant letters will find his sweetest, most solid, and most constant pleasures of the learned kind, in the writings of the Augustan age; yet he will often feel his curiosity powerfully excited, and amply rewarded, by those among the revivers of learning who are distinguished by the politeness of their literary accomplishments. I was lately amusing myself in this pleasant walk of classical literature, when I accidentally met with the Epistles of Philelphus. Though they were not without a few expressions which mark the barbarism of his times, they possess a considerable share of elegance, and partake much of the graces which shine so agreeably in the epistles of Pliny and Cicero.

Philelphus was born at Tolentino, in Italy, in the year 1398; a very early period for so uncommon an instance of proficiency. He died at Florence in 1480, after having filled a long life with the most laborious application. Let it be remembered, that printing was unknown at that time, and that not only the books which were composed, but which were also read, were often painfully transcribed by the student.

Philelphus was no inconsiderable poet, and was crowned with laurel, according to the fashion of the times, by Alphonso king of Naples. He wrote five different works in verse; and, according to his own account in one of his letters, they consisted of [illegible] books of satires, five books of miscellaneous poems,

the Sfortiad in eight books, ten books of epigrams, and three of Greek poems. The number of verses in the whole, as calculated by himself, amounted to thirty-three thousand eight hundred. He has omitted in this computation, his Nicholaus, a poem in two books, and in sapphic verse, which he composed in honour of Pope Nicholas the Fifth, by whom he was greatly esteemed, and who had invited him, by a large present, to undertake the translation of Homer into Latin. He was scarcely less voluminous in prose, but less original, as his prosaic works consist chiefly of translations from Lysias, Aristotle, Xenophon, Hippocrates, and Plutarch; though he has also written two books of Convivia, three entitled Commentationes Florentinæ, five on Moral Discipline, and the Life and Exploits of Francis Sfortia, in compliment to whom the Sfortiad, which has been mentioned already, was composed. There are also Orations, of which Erasmus speaks rather unfavourably in his Ciceronianus.

But the only work of Philelphus which I have had an opportunity of inspecting, is the Epistles, of which this prolific author, in the course of a long life, has written no fewer than thirty-seven books. These abound with eloquence, and with such literary anecdotes and particulars, as cannot but afford amusement to the curious scholar. Though Morhoff rather slights them, yet Erasmus, a much better judge, acknowledges that they resemble Cicero.

I present the reader with an extract from one of them, which I happen to be reading at the time I am writing, and which characterizes the spirit of the author, and the great attachment which he had to books. Cardinal Bessario, the patriarch of Constantinople, had applied to him, desiring him to sell his copy of Homer's Iliad; to which request Philelphus thus replies: "That copy of Homer's Iliad

which the very learned Theodore Gaza has written out for me, I value so much, that I would not part with it to any man, for all the treasures of Crœsus. I am really surprised that you should think that I, who always had the character of generosity, should be so much changed as to be capable of avarice. I have learned to give away many things, but to sell nothing; particularly books; than which I esteem nothing of greater value. But this book of Homer is so dear to my heart, and affords me so much pleasure, that life itself can furnish nothing more delightful. Therefore pardon me in this one thing. If I can gratify you in any thing else, you may command me, and shall not be disappointed." My paper will not admit a number of citations, and I will therefore content myself with referring the lover of elegant latinity and literary anecdotes to the original collection.

It is a circumstance which adds to our surprise in contemplating this example of literary industry, that Philelphus was very much engaged in wars and in embassies; so true is it, that the greatest exertions of mind are compatible with the most active life. His writings are not free from faults, or from that inaccuracy which proceeds from haste; but he is still a stupendous instance of diligence and excellence. Who but must lament, that, after having done so much to enlighten a dark age, and enjoyed the friendship of princes and pontiffs, he should die in his eighty-second year so poor, that his bed, and the utensils of his kitchen, were sold to pay the expenses of his funeral? But few men of real genius love money; and of the liberality of Philelphus, the fragment which I have inserted is an ample testimony.

I hope it will not be tedious or disagreeable to the reader, if I mention a few circumstances relative

to the friend and contemporary of Philelphus, Theodore Gaza, of whom he speaks in his epistle, as having transcribed for him a very fine copy of Homer's Iliad.

Theodore Gaza was born at Thessalonica, but received a part of his education in Italy. He was an elegant writer both in the Greek and the Latin languages; but he displayed his abilities chiefly in translation; a most useful labour when the learned languages were imperfectly understood. He translated parts of Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Hippocrates, into Latin; and the treatise of Cicero on Old Age into Greek. He wrote also a treatise on Grammar in four books, which has been greatly celebrated. Greek learning, and indeed all ancient learning, is greatly indebted to this distinguished reviver of it, Theodore Gaza.

But he also was unfortunate, and adds to the number of those whom Providence has exhibited to prove, that the rewards of virtuous and useful labour do not consist in riches, honours, or any thing else which the rulers of this world are able to bestow. Poor Gaza had dedicated his Translation and Commentaries on Aristotle's Book on Animals to Pope Sixtus the Fourth, in hopes of procuring from his patronage a little provision for his old age. The Pope gave him only a purse with a few pieces in it, and accompanied his gift with a manner which induced Gaza to conclude that it was the last favour he should receive. Gaza received it in silence; and as he walked home, all melancholy and indignant, along the banks of the Tiber, he threw the purse into the stream, and soon after died of vexation and disappointment.

I have introduced these examples with a view to animate the student to industry; and at the same time, to teach him to seek his reward in his own

heart, in the approbation of Heaven, in the private satisfactions of study; and not to depend too much on princes, pontiffs, or even popular favour.

NO. CXXXI.—ON THE INEFFICACY OF THAT STYLE OF SPEAKING AND WRITING WHICH MAY BE CALLED THE FROTHY.

On the decline of ancient learning and Augustan taste, there arose a number of sophists and declaimers, who, in pursuit of an excellence in style superior to the natural graces of a better age, deviated into a most contemptible affectation. Quaint, awkward, and frivolous as were their embellishments, they paid their principal attention to them, and totally neglected solidity of sense and substantial truth. This style of writing characterizes the decline of genuine and manly eloquence. It is, indeed, like the hectic efflorescence on the countenance of an invalid far advanced in a consumption.

In several departments of modern literature, and even in our own country, a style of writing has been used which very much resembles the sophistical and declamatory, which appeared in the decline and fall of Rome. But I know not that it has been so conspicuous in any one of our publications, as in the popular addresses from the pulpit. Several of the favourite preachers in the capital, who seldom fail to fill every church in which they harangue, and to raise the largest contributions to charity-schools, have presented the public with their sermons, in order to make the experiment, whether that oratory which delights the lower orders in the pulpit, would be equally well received in the closet. It was an unhappy experiment for the reputation

of the orators; for there hardly ever appeared more remarkable specimens of florid, frothy, and meretricious eloquence. Sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals, are descriptions of it truly emblematical. If it has any sweetness, it is a sweetness which cloys, and makes you sick; if there is any brightness, it is a brightness which dazzles and gives you pain; if there is any gold, it is not like the bullion, but like the leaf, expanded to a superficies almost impalpable under the operation of the goldbeater. Indeed, this species of style is very well described by the common epithet of the frothy; but, as a means of supplying aliment, or as a constant diet, what is a syllabub to a sirloin?

Indeed, almost all the popular preachers in London have found it easier to themselves, and more agreeable to an illiterate and unthinking audience, to address the ears, the fancy, and the passions, than to appeal to reason and judgement. If their discourses were found to produce any better effect on their hearers, than that of furnishing an amusement for a leisure half-hour, it would be wrong to censure them, merely because they are offensive to a delicate and refined or classical taste. But the truth is, that they excite only transient emotions, which, though they may last long enough to draw from the hearer a shilling for the churchwarden's plate at the church door, will seldom go home with him, or produce an uniform influence on his conduct. He goes to hear a fine preacher as he goes to a play, to be entertained when he has nothing else to do; he pays for his entertainment at the door, and gives himself no further concern on such subjects, but to look out for a similar pastime, when his shop, or warehouse, or counting-house, are shut up, through the necessity of complying with the laws and customs of the country.

It may be said that, though a taste formed by the pure models of Greece and Rome may reprobate the frothy style, yet, since it is found to entertain the vulgar of a great capital, sometimes usefully, and always innocently, it ought not to be exploded. But, perhaps, it cannot be granted that it does entertain them either usefully or innocently. It certainly gives them wrong ideas of religion, and teaches them to neglect and despise the dispassionate suggestions of reason. But it is one of the principal objections to this popular or frothy preaching, that it allures men from their own parish churches, and induces them to desert the pulpit of a modest and regularly-educated clergyman, for some noisy and bold, some ignorant and hypocritical pretender. It leads them from the light of the sun to those meteors and vapours, whose dancing and uncertain gleam conducts them into quagmires. There are few parishes in the metropolis which do not contain some thousands of inhabitants; but you shall often find in their respective churches not more than one hundred, and sometimes scarcely half that number. Whither are they gone? Many, indeed, are carousing in the delectable retreats of their country houses; but many are also gone to the new-built chapels, where some silver-tongued orator is preaching himself, with all the pathos of a white handkerchief, the splendour of a diamond ring, the smartness of a well-dressed head, and the grimaces of an impostor. Religion must lose much of her venerable air, when, instead of the decent clothing of a chaste and venerable matron, she is represented with the tawdry and flimsy garment, the painted cheeks, the glass ear-rings, the false brilliants of the faithless courtezan.

I think I may confidently affirm, that the frothy style would not be tolerated at the bar or in the

senate. It would be thought too trifling for the important subjects of property and politics. It would be an object of ridicule wherever the business of the world is transacted. And shall that oratory which is hooted from the forum, not only take refuge, but lift up her head in triumph, in the pulpit? It is not surprising that men of sense pass by wagging their heads, when they find an orator haranguing in a church with all the affected language and sentiments of a fashionable auctioneer. The eloquence which has distinguished many of the most favourite preachers, and writers of pulpit-harangues, is not that of St. Paul, of Demosthenes, of Cicero; but of those great masters of florid description, the orators of the hammer.

I believe it will appear consistent with reason, that a peculiar degree of gravity and solidity, far exceeding that of the senate or bar, is required to produce the due effect of pulpit oratory. Practical divinity is the gravest species of moral philosophy, deriving additional dignity and force from revelation. The appearance of truth and simplicity is its most becoming ornament. To apply to it the little arts of rhetoric, and the petty graces of affectation, would be like painting, in tawdry and variegated colours, those Corinthian columns of St. Paul's cathedral which derive all their beauties from their simple and symmetrical grandeur. When we go to church, we hope to hear salutary truth, and to receive improvement of mind and morals. When we wish to be only amused, we shall repair to the opera and the puppet-show.

I will take the liberty to hint to the young and fashionable divines of the chapels at the polite end of the town, who are in general smitten with the false graces of style and delivery, that their congregation would be much more edified, if, instead of

trite essays, in what they call *fine language*, they would preach sermons, properly so called, in the plain style of truth, simplicity, and Scripture. Let them also take care, as they will answer it to Him in whose name they ascend the pulpit, not to preach themselves, but the Gospel; not to be so solicitous in the display of a white hand, as of a pure heart; of a diamond ring, as of a shining example.

NO. CXXXII.—ON THE GENIUS OF ERASMUS.

BATAVIA and Bœotia are by no means remarkable for the production of genius; but Bœotia may boast her Pindar, and Batavia her Erasmus.

I mean not to consider the theological opinions of Erasmus, but his learning and his genius; and of these I may venture to affirm, that if Erasmus had lived in an Augustan age, they would have advanced him to a rank among the best of the classics. But the theology and theologians of his times were at open war with the graces of taste and elegance; and, considering the authority which they possessed, and the scarcity of any other writings than those which proceeded from the cloister, it may be pronounced almost impossible to have lived and written in that age, without contracting a tinge of the prevailing barbarism.

The style of Erasmus is not therefore *perfectly* pure and classical, though it partakes of those qualities in a high degree; but it is his own, and it has a native charm which renders it agreeable. It is remarkable for vivacity. I would not advise a young man to view it as a finished model; nor, indeed, to be much conversant in the works of Erasmus, or any modern writer of Latin, till his taste be formed,

and his judgement regulated, by Terence, Virgil, Cæsar, and Cicero.

But he whose mind is mature, and whose comprehensive powers are capable of grasping all preeminent authors, whether ancient or modern, will receive pleasure and improvement, in a great degree, from the writings of Erasmus. They have usually been studied only by divines, and for theological information. But I warmly recommend them to the lover of philology or of classical learning, as furnishing a dish for such a palate both plentiful and highly seasoned. Erasmus was born to cultivate the *literæ humaniores*, or the politer parts of learning; and I have often lamented, that he should have been diverted from those flowery paths into the rough and thorny roads of controversial divinity.

The Colloquies, or Dialogues of Erasmus, are often used to initiate boys, at an early age, in the study of the Latin language. They are uncommonly lively, entertaining, and instructive; and as there is not much danger of corrupting the style of a very young boy, there are perhaps few books better adapted to the purpose. Indeed, we must not do Erasmus the injustice to assert that he is devoid of elegance in style; for though, wherever he expresses theological ideas, he is almost under the necessity of using words unknown to the writers of a better age, yet, on other occasions, he abounds with phrases of the purest and the sweetest latinity. Neither are his Dialogues to be considered as fit only for boys, since they abound in wit, humour, good sense, and in allusions which strongly mark the fertility of the mind from which they originated. In a comparative estimate of genius, according to its kinds and degrees, I should not hesitate to place Erasmus in the same class with Lucian. There is, indeed, a seasoning of salt in all his writings in which the necessity

of being grave did not forbid him to be facetious. The Dialogue entitled *Ciceronianus* is an admirable specimen of judgement and pleasantry.

His Praise of Folly is a most humorous satire, and reflects no less honour on the inventive powers, than on the good sense of its author; as it was written, if I mistake not, in the space of one week, for the amusement of himself and Sir Thomas More, at whose house he was upon a visit. It made its author many enemies; but his genius rose like the arm of a giant against a host of pigmies, and defeated them all after a short conflict. His forgiveness of the vain and angry Dorpius, who first attacked him, evinces his magnanimity and goodness of heart. Spite and envy may secretly undermine, but can seldom make an open and successful attack on the fortress of true genius and sincere virtue.

But the Epistles of Erasmus will, perhaps, be found to furnish the student in philology with more amusement than any other of his works. They are, indeed, a valuable treasure of curious information. Their clear and lively language, their poignant wit, and good-natured humour, render it difficult to lay them aside, when once we are engaged in the perusal of them. They are very numerous, as they appear in the editions which we possess, but these are by no means all which Erasmus wrote. He complains of being obliged to write so many, that there was not a possibility of taking copies of them all. A great share of knowledge of the world, and of human nature, as well as of letters and literary characters, may be collected from them by the attentive reader. They are a treasure of wit, humour, and good sense.

But, indeed, to whatever part of his voluminous works we turn our attention, we can scarcely avoid feeling sentiments of pleasure and surprise. He has

written more than many students were ever able to read. He has written so excellently, that all the learned, except a few envious contemporaries, from his own time to ours, have uniformly considered him as a prodigy. And let it never be forgotten, that, under Providence, he owed his education and subsequent improvements entirely to himself. He was used ill and neglected in his youth. He abounded neither in books nor in instructors; but he possessed a genius and a love of letters, before which all obstacles usually give way, like the Alps to an Hannibal.

It adds greatly to our wonder, in contemplating his large and crowded tomes, when we recollect that he spent his life in a most unsettled state, and in constantly travelling from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom. But his mind was employed in study wherever he went, and he composed many parts of his works as he rode on his horse. He was also attacked by many enemies; and though he was placable, yet as he was also irascible, much of that time and attention, which would otherwise have been devoted to calm contemplation and works of general utility, was necessarily lost in personal controversy.

He was certainly the greatest man of his time. Popes, kings, archbishops, bishops, and cardinals, hide their diminished heads in his presence. One is, indeed, almost tempted to laugh when one surveys a group of stupid personages, with crowns and mitres, riches and titles, sitting on their thrones and in their cathedrals, yet bowing, with an homage at once abject and involuntary, to the personal merit of the poor, neglected, unpreferred Erasmus. He was permitted by Providence to perform a pilgrimage through this world without ecclesiastical riches or dignity; he was designed as an instance to prove,

that great merit is its own reward, and that temporal distinctions are allowed, like trifles beneath the notice of Heaven, to fall indiscriminately on the deserving and the undeserving, the learned and the ignorant. Erasmus had no mitre; but he had the internal satisfactions of genius; he had glory, he had liberty, and the wearers of mitres crouched at the awful dignity of his personal merit.

Though I am sensible he wants no addition to his fame, and could not receive any from my applause, yet I have ventured to pay him this humble tribute, as the oblation of gratitude for the great and repeated pleasure which his works once afforded me in the retirement of a college, and still afford me in the occupations of an active life.

NO. CXXXIII.—ON THE EDUCATION OF A PRINCE.

An opinion has often prevailed, that the education of a prince ought to be totally different from that of other gentlemen, and that any remarkable share of learning would disgrace him. I shall not hesitate to affirm, that they were the enemies of princes who advanced such an opinion; for nothing can contribute more effectually to the general abolition of the monarchical form of government, than to render the character and person of the monarch contemptible. In an age and country enlightened like our own, if a king were the only gentleman unadorned with a liberal education, his kingly office would contribute to render his person less dignified. Though he should sit on his throne, surrounded by his cringeing courtiers and his standing army; and though he should number among the provinces of his empire, the regions of the east and the west; yet, in the eyes of

every sensible and independent spectator, his personal littleness would be rendered still less, by a comparison with his hereditary and official magnificence.

Every friend therefore to a reigning family, every lover of political tranquillity and of regular subordination, will wish to augment the personal accomplishments of that youth who is destined, at some future period, to wield a sceptre. He will recollect, that the mind of a prince comes from the hand of nature, in a state no less rude than the mind of a peasant; and that, if it is not formed by early culture, it will soon become much ruder, more refractory, and more vicious, under the many unfavourable circumstances of an exalted station. It will be readily allowed, that a peculiar polish, enlargement, and liberality is required in him who is to look with a comprehensive eye through all the ranks of society, and estimate the true interests of nations, and of mankind at large. Both the heart and the understanding of such an one should be expanded to the utmost degree of possible dilatation.

But no method of culture is found so much to fertilize the human mind, as that kind of discipline which is called the classical. A prince, therefore, though he should certainly be educated in private, ought to be trained according to the modes which the experience of ages has established as the most successful in a public seminary. No whimsical systems of pragmatical and conceited tutors should be admitted. The boy should be taught his grammar like other boys; for though there is indeed a royal game of the goose, I never have yet heard of a royal method of learning Latin and Greek, and if there be such an one, the success of it still remains among the arcana of state.

An heir to a crown should certainly learn the an-

cient as well as the modern languages; and he will not be able to learn them effectually, without learning them radically. Away then with the indolence and indulgence which grandeur foolishly claims as a happy privilege! Let the boy, if you wish him to maintain the dignity of a man and a king, be early inured to mental labour. Let his memory, while a child, be exercised in learning the rules of Lilly's Grammar. Let him be confined to his books and papers all the morning, and part of the evening, from the age of five to nineteen. The maids of honour will cry out, Shame! the sycophantic herd of young noblemen, who crowd, with all the servility of their own footmen, around a throne, will repine that they cannot have an opportunity of introducing themselves to the familiarity of the future king;—but regard neither the foolish exclamations of vanity, nor the mean murmurs of self-interest. Proceed with him regularly from the fables of Phædrus to the philosophy of Cicero, from the Cyropædia of Xenophon to the histories and politics of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Sallust, and Polybius. Let his ear be familiarized to the fine language and sentiments of Cicero and Demosthenes, and his heart ennobled by the examples of the brightest characters of Greece and Rome.

Why should his superintendents be so cruel as not to cultivate in him a taste for the beauties of poetry, or leave him unacquainted with Homer and Virgil? An elegant taste, a humanized disposition, an enlightened understanding, will adorn him more than the jewels in his crown, or the robes of royalty. It will give him an internal source of happiness, and will teach him rather to seek his pleasures in a humane and generous conduct, than in the display of pomp, or the indulgence of luxury. A prince, with a mind uncultivated, will too often take his chief

delight in mischief, in vice, or in unprincely occupations; but he, whose understanding is illuminated and heart purified by a right discipline, will deserve a title which has been often unjustly claimed —that of Heaven's vicegerent.

When, by the close application of ten or twelve years, a firm and broad basis is laid of ancient learning, let the stripling be introduced to the avenues of all the parts of human knowledge. Let the years which elapse till he is of the age of three or four and twenty, be employed in acquiring proper ideas of all the objects, whether natural or civil, which surround him, under the tuition of some enlightened Mentor, who possesses not only official and titular, but personal authority; under one who is not frightened by the laughter of fashion, of dissipation, or of false philosophy, from filling his pupil's mind with moral virtues, and a sincere, not a political, veneration for Christianity.

All this is a general preparation for the particular pursuits which become a king, and these are law and politics. I mean not the narrow system of a mercenary practitioner and a cunning statesman, but the general principles of justice and equity; the wise maxims of government, as it is instituted for the diffusion of happiness and virtue among the individuals of a nation, and not for the extension of empire, or the accumulation of destructive opulence. What a situation is a throne for the indulgence of the feelings of a Christian, and of a compassionate friend to wretched human nature! I would not, indeed, refer a prince for maxims of equity and government to Puffendorf and Grotius, the dull and unfeeling deliberators of questions on which a good heart and understanding can intuitively decide; but to his own heart, to his own enlightened reason, to the page of Scripture, and to the volumes of authen-

ticated history. Let him appropriate the lessons of Telemachus.

Princes have been almost uniformly confined in their views to the narrow systems of worldly politicians and of interested courtiers. False grandeur has fascinated themselves and their subjects. National prosperity has been estimated by fleets and armies, commerce and revenues. The morals, the health, the religion of the individuals, are considerations which do not always claim the attention of a cabinet, but are sometimes discarded as subjects of declamation in the church or in the schools. But what is national grandeur, glory, or prosperity, independently of the virtue and happiness of the individuals who constitute the nation?

Imagination triumphs in the prospect of a golden age, when princes, and all who are concerned in the executive parts of government, shall be early formed to virtue, to learning, to humanity, to religion. How happy, it has been said, would it be if philosophers, justly so called, were kings, or kings philosophers!

NO. CXXXIV.—INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE ART OF PRINTING.

That the desire of knowledge for its own sake, is an adventitious passion, unknown to nature, and to be classed among the refinements of civilisation, is an opinion unsupported by experience, and derogatory from the native dignity of a rational creature. Fancy and sentiment, the powers of the intellect, and the feelings of the heart, are, perhaps, by nature equally strong and susceptible in the rude Indian and in the polished member of an established com-

munity. Perhaps these similar powers would be equally fit for exertion, and these propensities equally importunate for gratification, if the savage were not constantly engaged in providing for that necessary sustenance, which, without his own interposition, is commonly secured in every civilised country to the philosopher.

The pupil of nature, under all his disadvantages, feels the impulse of a species of literary curiosity, and seeks its satisfaction. He possesses the faculty of memory; he must, therefore, without the cooperation of his will, remember many of the impressions received by the senses; he has a power of reflection, which will teach him to reason and draw inferences, without designing it, from the objects of his experience and observation. He finds within himself an imagination, capable of recalling past ideas of pleasure and pain, and apt to be delighted by beauty, novelty, and grandeur. Every natural exertion of natural faculties, is attended with satisfaction. He feels it from the unpremeditated exertions of the mental powers; he tacitly acknowledges it to be congenial to his mind, and of course endeavours to repeat, to extend, and to prolong it: but the objects which fall under the notice of his own senses and his personal experience, are insufficient in number and importance to satisfy his capacity. He is led to inquire what passed among his forefathers, and in his turn is requested by his progeny to communicate his own remarks or recitals, superadded to the information of his ancestors.

Such, probably, is the origin of tradition; a mode of communicating knowledge once universal, and still, perhaps, subsisting in the newly discovered islands of the Pacific Ocean, on the banks of the Senegal, and at the foot of the Andes. Beneath the shade of his plantain, the patriarch Indian still re-

cites the divine origin of his tribe or family, the warlike actions of his ancestors, and of his own personal prowess. The attentive audience carry away the tale, and supply the defects of memory by the aid of imagination. The story spreads, time gives it a sanction, and at last it is found to constitute the most authentic history, however obscure and fabulous, of the origin of a nation, after it has emerged from barbarism, and is become the seat of arts and learning.

In the earliest and rudest state of literature, if we may give that appellation to the efforts of the intellectual faculties where letters are unknown, is often produced the most animated, and perhaps most perfect, though least artificial, poetry. Historic truth is, indeed, little regarded in the infancy of society, as it is addressed to reason rather than to fancy; but poetic composition appears with marks of genius approaching to inspiration. From his memory, or his invention, or from both, the savage is heard to pour forth the song of war, and to warble the notes of love, warm with the sentiments of a feeling heart, and compensating the want of regularity and grace, by the strength and vivacity of natural expression.

If we believe the representations of some writers, poems equal in length to the most celebrated epopeas of Greece and Rome, have been handed down, without the aid of letters, from the remotest antiquity to the present day; and in our own country and times, traditionary tales, poetic and prosaic, are known to abound in that lowest class among us, who are yet unacquainted with the elements of learning. The tenant of the cottage, stupid and incurious as he may appear to the polite observer, possesses his fund of entertaining knowledge, and knows how to enliven the winter evening with tales of fai-

ries, giants, and enchantments, which he believed on the word of his progenitors, and which his hearers receive with equal pleasure and credulity, intending to transmit them to the rising generation.

The early appearance and the universality of traditionary learning, seems to establish the opinion, that the love of knowledge is among the first and most importunate desires inherent to the human heart. We see it believing absurdity, and admiring nonsense; we see it bearing one of the strongest characteristics of natural inclinations, a proneness to neglect reason in pursuit of gratification.

This ardent love of knowledge, which gave rise to tradition, soon invented improvements which superseded its general necessity. Tradition was soon found to be attended with great inconveniences, and to be defective in its most perfect state. A thousand important circumstances must necessarily elude the most retentive memory; and, beside the evils resulting from the weakness of that faculty, and from the general inclination to exaggerate and embellish the simplicity of truth, the want of written standards to appeal to, afforded constant opportunities for imposition. Uprightness of intention, and strength of memory, were not always united in those who undertook the recital of events. Accuracy and justness of representation were rare; and the civil history of every people, without a single exception, is, in its first periods, dark and incoherent: such, indeed, as might be expected from oral authority.

The inventor of means to supply the defects of memory, and to preclude the opportunity of deceit, it is obvious to conclude, would be considered as a great benefactor to mankind, and elevated by the exuberant gratitude of a rude age above the rank of humanity. To Theuth, the inventor of letters

among the Egyptians, and to the same personage, under the name of Hermes among the Greeks, divine honours were paid; an apotheosis surely more justifiable on principles of reason, than that of Bacchus the cultivator of the vine, or of Hercules the cleanser of a stable.

To communicate their discovery, the inventors of literary symbols found it necessary to make them on some substance susceptible of impression or penetration. What that substance was, is a subject of curious, but unimportant inquiry. The original mode of inscribing the newly discovered characters, however conducted, was probably very imperfect; but, as it happens in all discoveries of momentous consequence, the idea of it, once started, was pursued with that general ardour and attention, which never fails to produce a great improvement. The stone, the palm-leaf, the biblos or bark of the linden tree, the leaden tablet, the papyrus, the parchment, and the pugillares, respectively served, as progressive advancement suggested, or as convenience required, to receive the written lucubrations of the ancient poet, philosopher, legislator, and historian.

That many of the noblest efforts of ancient genius, though committed to writing on substances so frail as the papyrus, and so subject to erasure as the waxen tablet, should have reached the present age, is an event only to be accounted for by supposing, that their conspicuous beauties, or experienced importance, occasioned uncommon vigilance and solicitude in their preservation.

At a very late period, a substance formed of macerated linen, was found superior in beauty, convenience, and duration, and better adapted to the purposes of literature, than all the prior devices of mechanical ingenuity. It derived its name from

the flag that grew on the banks of the Nile, which, though it in some degree resembled, it greatly excelled. Porous, yet of firm contexture, it admitted the inscription of characters with a facility equalled only by the retention with which it preserved them. By the ease with which it is procured and inscribed, it rescued the ancient authors from the possibility of oblivion, and may strictly be said to have formed that monument more durable than brass, which a celebrated poet prophesied to himself with a confidence, justified at length by the accomplishment of his prediction.

NO. CXXXV.—ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF PRINTING: WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON IT.

The business of transcribing the remains of Grecian and Roman literature, became an useful, an innocent, and pleasing employ to many of those who, in the dark ages, would else have pined in the listless languor of monastic retirement. Exempt from the avocations of civil life, incapable of literary exertions from the want of books and opportunities of improvement, they devoted the frequent intervals of religious duty to the transcription of authors whom they often little understood. The servile office of a mere copyist was not disdained by those who knew not to invent; and the writers in the *scriptorium*, a place in monasteries devoted to copying, were inspired with an emulation to excel, in the beauty and variety of their illuminations, the fidelity of their copy, and the multitude of their performances.

But when every letter of every copy was to be formed by the immediate operation of the hand, the most persevering assiduity could effect but little.

The old manuscripts appear not to have been written with the rapidity of a modern transcriber, but with formal stiffness, or a correct elegance, equally inconsistent with expedition. They were therefore rare, and consequently much valued; and, whenever sold, were sold at a great price. Few, indeed, but crowned and mitred heads, or incorporated communities, were able to procure a number sufficient to merit the appellation of a library; and even the boasted libraries of princes and prelates, were such as are now easily exceeded by every private collection. To be poor, with whatever ability or inclination, was, at one time, an insurmountable obstacle to literary improvement: and, perhaps, we indulge an unreasonable acrimony in our general censure of monkish sloth and ignorance, not considering that an involuntary fault ceases to be blameable; that ignorance is necessary where the means of information are scarce; and that sloth is not to be avoided, where the requisites of proper employment are not attainable without great expense or earnest solicitation.

It was, perhaps, less with a view to obviate these inconveniences, than from the interested motives of deriving greater gain by exacting the usual price for copies multiplied with more ease and expedition, that a new mode was at length practised, derived from the invention of the art of printing; a discovery which, of all those recorded in civil history, is of the most important and extensive consequence.

That the first productions of the press were intended to pass for manuscripts, we are led to conclude from the resemblance of the type to the written characters, from the omission of illuminations, which were to be supplied by the pen to facilitate the deception, and from the inventor's concealment of his process, so far as to incur suspicion of witch-

craft or magic, by which alone the first observers could account for the extraordinary multiplication of the transcripts.

But the deceit was soon detected. The perfect resemblance in the shape of the letters, in the place and number of the words on every page, the singular correctness, and, above all, the numerous copies of the same author, inevitably led to a discovery of the secret. To conceal it, indeed, was no longer desired, when experience had suggested the great lucrative advantages and the practicability of multiplying books without end by the process newly invented. It soon appeared, though it was not obvious at first, that the new mode would be more agreeable to the reader, as well as easier to the copyist, and that printed books would universally supersede the use of manuscripts, from a choice founded on judicious preference. The art of printing was soon professed as a trade, and the business of copying, which had once afforded only amusement or gain to the curious and the idle, became the constant employment and support of a numerous tribe of artisans, and constituted a very considerable source of mercantile advantage.

Of an art, which, though it had yet acquired but small degrees of perfection, appeared of most extensive utility in religion, in politics, in literature, and even in commerce, no labour has been spared to investigate the history; but, unfortunately, the inquirers into the origin of arts, instigated by the zeal of minute curiosity to push their researches too far, often discover them so rude, obvious, and inartificial at their commencement, as to reflect very little honour on those whom they ostentatiously exhibit as the earliest inventors. Such has been the result of the investigations of those who, dissatisfied with the commonly-received opinions on the date

of the invention of printing, pretend to have discovered traces of it many years before the first production of Faustus, in 1457; and it is true, that the Speculum Salutis, and a few other books are extant, which, on good reasons, are judged to have been stamped, not printed *secundum artem*, long before the erection of a press at Mentz; but the mode in which they were executed, like the Chinese, bears but little resemblance to the art of printing properly so called; it appears not, by any historical memoir, to have suggested the first hint of it, and is too imperfect to deserve notice as even the infant state of this momentous invention.

National pride, like the pride of individuals, is often founded on slight or dubious pretensions. Thus have Germany and Holland contended, with all the warmth of party, for the imaginary honour of giving birth to the inventor of printing, who, after all, was probably led to the discovery, not by the enlarged views of public utility, but by fortunate circumstances concurring with the desire of private and pecuniary advantage: but though the history of printing, like all other histories, is in some degree obscure and doubtful at its earliest period; though Strasburg has boasted of Mentel, and Haarlem of Coster, as the inventor; yet is there great reason to conclude, that the few arguments advanced in their favour are supported only by forgery and falsehood: and we may safely assert, with the majority of writers, and with the general voice of Europe, that the time of the invention was about the year 1440; the place Mentz, and the persons Guttenburg, Faustus, and Schaeffer, in conjunction.

He who wishes to trace the art in its gradual progress, from the wooden and immoveable letter to the moveable and metal type, and to the completion of the whole contrivance, will receive satis-

factory information from the annals of the elaborate Mattaire. In the mean time, the essayist will avoid the repetition of facts already too well known and established to admit additional illustration, and will think himself more properly employed in making reflections on the literary, the moral, the political, and the religious effects which have resulted from the invention.

It is, indeed, generally true, that the history of a mechanical art affords but insipid entertainment to a mind which is tinctured with the liberality of philosophy and the elegance of classical literature. It often exhibits manual excellence united with such meanness of sentiment and vulgarity of manners, as unavoidably mingle disgust with admiration: but to the truth of this general remark, the annals of typography are a singular exception. Many are recorded to have laboured at the press, whose literary attainments would have done honour to the chair of a professor. By their annotations, they illustrated the sense and spirit of those authors, the letter of whose writings they embellished by the most beautiful and accurate impressions.

The names of the Aldi, of Robert and Henry Stephans, of Turnebus, and of many more who united mechanical ingenuity with profound erudition, will ever be remembered with respect and gratitude by the votary of ancient learning. Happily for letters, at a time when the valuable works of antiquity were contained in manuscripts, sometimes illegibly written, and often mutilated or corrupted, a number of men arose whose knowledge and sagacity, though artisans or mechanics, enabled them to ascertain and exhibit, by the newly discovered art, the genuine reading. Such men were greater benefactors to mankind, than many who have been more celebrated; nor is it an ill-grounded glory which Italy

derives from her Manutii, Germany from her Froben, France from her Stephani, the Netherlands from their Plantin, and England from her Caxton.

Every lover of accurate editions looks back with regret on those times when an Erasmus corrected what an Aldus printed; when, like the painter of antiquity, a printer exposed his production to the passenger and solicited censure; and when the legislature of a great nation provided by a statute, with a penalty, for the correctness of publications.

To prefer, with implicit attachment, all the earlier productions of the art to the more recent, were to be actuated with the narrow spirit of a typographical virtuoso; yet the truth is, what indeed was to be expected from the superior learning of those who were formerly concerned in the process, they surpass the more splendid editions of later times in the one great excellence of correctness. It is true, indeed, that the fungous production of the modern writer, appears with a splendour of paper, and brilliancy of type, unknown in the fifteenth century: and, if the work is written in the vernacular language, and on a familiar subject, is perhaps sufficiently correct. It is true likewise, that, considering the expedition of the artisan, the degree of correctness with which the common papers of intelligence appear is really wonderful, and affords a striking instance how much industry can effect, when stimulated to exertion by the hope of that abundant gain, which our more than Athenian love of political information constantly supplies. Of such dispatch, a Plantin would, perhaps, have denied the possibility. But books of learning, especially when written in the dead languages, are more slowly brought forth, and by no means with equal perfection. The mistaken avarice, the careless precipitation, and the gross ignorance of some modern ty-

pographers, often frustrate all the past labour of correctors and commentators, who have toiled with aching eyes in the revisal of proof sheets, and in the collation of manuscripts. The editions of Greek and Latin classics produced within these few years from the English press, are deplorably incorrect, and seem to indicate a declension of an art which has afforded light and given honour to empires. The paper and the type are beautiful; but they are both spoiled by the want of learned and accurate correction. A corrector should read with a microscopic eye; and the reward of honour and emolument should await his faithful labours. His work is the work of the head; the rest is mechanical.

NO. CXXXVI.—ON THE MORAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS EFFECTS OF PRINTING: WITH CONCLUDING REMARKS.

By one of those laudable artifices which prevent private avarice from withholding public benefits, the art of printing was stolen from Haarlem, and brought to Oxford by Frederic Corsellis. But while we advert to the introduction of printing into England, not to commemorate the names of Bouchier, Turnour, and Caxton, who were most instrumental to it, would be an omission equally negligent and ungrateful. Nor should the tribute of praise be any longer withheld by neglect from earl Tiptoft and earl Rivers, who, at that period, were restorers and patrons of learning in our own country, and who contributed to its advancement, in imitation of their contemporary, Pius the Second in Italy, both by their munificence and example.

The literary advantages derived from the inven-

tion are so obvious, that to point them out with all the formality of disquisition is unnecessary.

But the moralist, no less than the man of letters, finds himself interested in the consequences resulting from the mechanical mode of multiplying the copies of books. To this cause he attributes that change in the manners and sentiments which has taken place within the interval of a century or two, and which cannot escape even superficial observation. Philosophy, once preserved among a chosen few, with the selfishness of an Alexander, who reprimanded Aristotle for divulging the secrets of science, has now diffused its influence on the mean as well as the great, the gay and the fair as well as the severe and studious, the merchant and the manufacturer as well as the contemplative professor. Pamphlets and manuals, on every subject of human inquiry, are circulated by the assiduous trader at a small price among the lowest ranks of the community, the greatest part of whom have been furnished with the ability of reading by an eleemosynary education. A tincture of letters, which was once rare, and formed a shining character, has pervaded the mass of the people, and in a free country like our own, where it is not checked in its operation by political restraints, has produced remarkable effects on the general system of morality. Much good has resulted from it: happy, if it had not been mixed with the characteristic alloy of human happiness, much evil. Learning thus communicated to the vulgar, has taught the savage ferocity of gross ignorance to yield to gentleness and humanity; but it has also superinduced a general indolence, refinement, and false delicacy. It has been the means of exhibiting, to the best advantage, the image of virtue in her natural beauty; but it has also held up to view the meretricious charms of vice in the

false ornaments superadded by a corrupt imagination. It has been a steady light to lighten men in the path of truth; but it has also been a meteor leading them into the mazes of error, and plunging them at last into the depths of misery. If it has often tempted us to boast of living in an enlightened age, it has no less frequently induced us to regret the old times of ignorant but innocent simplicity. If we sometimes look back with a mixture of scorn and pity on the unlettered ages that preceded us; we also sometimes confess ourselves ready to renounce the pride of superior knowledge for the solid happiness of that national probity, which, though it may not have receded, has not kept pace with our progress in scientific improvement. Here, however, the old maxim will be suggested to every one, that a good argument against the use of a thing, cannot be drawn from its abuse. It will, at the same time, be remembered, that the present times are ever seen through the fallacious mediums of prejudice and passion; and that the censures of the satirist may not arise from real degeneracy, but that common propensity which has, in all ages, given rise to invectives against the prevailing manners. If it is true, that improvement in knowledge is a natural and laudable object of human desire, the more general that improvement, the happier and more perfect is human nature, and the more estimable that art from which it is principally derived.

But, however equivocal the effects of the universal dissemination of literature on the morals of those who cannot judge and select with the same ease with which they can procure books, there is no doubt of their being beneficial among others, whose judgement is directed by liberal culture, and whose sentiments are undepraved by fashionable dissipation. Before the introduction of printing, the

student who revolted at the idea of languishing in the sloth of monkery, had scarcely any scope for his industry and talents, but in the puerile perplexities of a scholastic philosophy, as little adapted to call forth the virtues of the heart, as to promote valuable knowledge: but since that important æra in the annals of learning, every individual, even the poorest of the muses' train, has been enabled to obtain, without difficulty, the works of those great masters in practical and speculative ethics, the Greek and Roman philosophers. He is taught by the same instructors who formed a Xenophon and a Scipio, and can hold converse in the retirements of his chamber, with the celebrated sages of antiquity, with nearly the same advantages as if he actually sat with Socrates beneath the shade of the plane-tree, walked with Plato in the Lyceum, or accompanied Cicero to his Tusculan villa.

Whatever tends to diffuse new light on the understandings of a whole people, or to effect a change in the general system of manners, soon produces a similar revolution in their political character. Airy fabrics, which, when seen through the mists of ignorance, were supposed to be realities, vanished at the light of learning, as the enchantment is dissolved by the operation of the talisman. The sun of science arose, the prospect cleared around, and they who had shuddered at the ideal phantoms of the night, ventured to walk forth and examine every object that solicited attention. The prejudices on the subject of civil government, formed by ignorance, and fostered by the policy of power, when once the art of printing had multiplied books, and roused the spirit of inquiry, soon gave way to the dictates of instructed reason. The natural rights of mankind became well understood, the law of nations was attended to, implicit obedience was neither

exacted on the one part with the same rigour as before, nor paid on the other with equal servility. What remained of the feudal institutions could not long subsist, when more liberal ideas of the nearer equality of mankind were imbibed from books, and when a great degree of dignity and power was attainable, not only by birth and riches, but by mere literary eminence. The distinction of vassal and lord soon ceased to be the only one in the community, when men were led, by the ease with which books were procured, to aspire after the fine arts, philosophy, and erudition. Such studies infused a noble generosity of spirit, which scorned to pay an abject homage to ignorant opulence. Ignorant opulence, indeed, could not maintain, or even exact by force, that truly valuable respect which is naturally due, and cheerfully paid, to personal dignity. Men, by reading, were led to reflect, and by reflection discovered that they had been under an error when they looked up to their governors as to a superior order of beings; but at the same time they learned the happiness of living under a well-regulated constitution, the duty of obedience in return for protection, and the political necessity of subordination. History, and treatises of politics, suggested just notions of civil society, and a sense of expediency produced at length that voluntary acquiescence which was once exacted by pretensions to divine right, or by the immediate interposition of authority. The lust of dominion, which disgraced the iron reign of the sullen and unlettered tyrant, was succeeded, in the enlightened father of his people, by a spirit of benevolence and philosophical moderation. That power, which was once placed on the sandy foundation of popular prejudice and fear, when those fears and prejudices were dissipated by free disquisition, acquired an establishment on the basis of reason.

Nor let it be deemed idle speculation to attribute these salutary consequences to the invention of printing, since to him who attentively considers all its remote as well as proximate effects, it will appear fully adequate to their production. When all ranks of people on a sudden were enabled to exert with vigour the faculty of accurate and comprehensive thought, which had only lain dormant for want of opportunity, the effect on the moral and political world must be as striking, as that which takes place in the physical, at the return of day after night, and spring after winter.

Thus has Faustus and Mentz, by an art invented and exercised with views of private emolument, ultimately contributed more to the empires, and caused more important events in their history, than all the efforts of the renowned conquerors and lawgivers of antiquity. That the same art which has produced these salutary consequences, has also been the means of encouraging licentiousness, of animating sedition, and kindling the flames of civil war, is to be attributed to that lamentable condition of human affairs which is observed to counterbalance every good with a portion of concomitant evil.

To the art of printing, however, it is acknowledged, we owe the Reformation. It has been justly remarked, that if the books of Luther had been multiplied only by the slow process of the hand writing, they must have been few, and would easily have been suppressed by the combination of wealth and power: but, poured forth in abundance from the press, they spread over the land with the rapidity of an inundation, which acquires additional force from the efforts used to obstruct its progress. He who undertook to prevent the dispersion of the books once issued from the press, attempted a task no less arduous than the destruction of the Hydra.

Resistance was vain, and religion was reformed: and we who are chiefly interested in this happy revolution must remember, amidst the praises bestowed on Luther, that his endeavours had been ineffectual, unassisted by the invention of Faustus.

How greatly the cause of religion has been promoted by the art, must appear, when it is considered, that it has placed those sacred books in the hand of every individual, which, besides that they were once locked up in a dead language, could not be procured without great difficulty. The numerous comments on them of every kind, which tend to promote piety, and to form the Christian philosopher, would probably never have been composed, and certainly would not have extended their beneficial influence, if typography had still been unknown. By that art, the light, which is to illuminate a dark world, has been placed in a situation more advantageous to the emission of its rays: but if it has been the means of illustrating the doctrines, and enforcing the practice of religion, it has also, particularly in the present age, struck at the root of piety and moral virtue, by propagating opinions favourable to the sceptic and the voluptuary. It has enabled modern authors wantonly to gratify their avarice, their vanity, and their misanthropy, in disseminating novel systems subversive of the dignity and happiness of human nature: but though the perversion of the art is lamentably remarkable in those volumes which issue, with offensive profusion, from the vain, the wicked, and the hungry, yet this good results from the evil, that as truth is great and will prevail, she must derive fresh lustre, by displaying the superiority of her strength in the conflict with sophistry.

Thus the art of printing, in whatever light it is viewed, has deserved respect and attention. From

the ingenuity of the contrivance, it has ever excited mechanical curiosity; from its intimate connexion with learning, it has justly claimed historical notice; and from its extensive influence on morality, politics, and religion, it is now become a subject of very important speculation.

But, however we may felicitate mankind on the invention, there are perhaps those who wish that, together with its compatriot art of manufacturing gunpowder, it had not yet been brought to light. Of its effects on literature, they assert, that it has increased the number of books, till they distract, rather than improve the mind; and of its malignant influence on morals, they complain, that it has often introduced a false refinement, incompatible with the simplicity of primitive piety and genuine virtue. With respect to its literary ill consequences, it may be said, that though it produces to the world an infinite number of worthless publications, yet true wit and fine composition will still retain their value, and it will be an easy task for critical discernment to select these from the surrounding mass of absurdity: and though, with respect to its moral effects, a regard to truth extorts the confession, that it has diffused immorality and irreligion, divulged with cruel impertinence the secrets of private life, and spread the tale of scandal through an empire; yet these are evils which will either shrink away unobserved in the triumphs of time and truth over falsehood, or which may, at any time, be suppressed by legislative interposition.

The *liberty of the press* is a subject not to be touched upon but with a trembling caution. Every student must abhor the thought of erecting the tribunal of a star-chamber in the republic of letters; every lover of his country must reject with disdain the proposal of silencing the voice of truth by the

menace of authority; but, at the same time, every true friend to learning and mankind, who, free from the enthusiasm of party, understands their real interest, would rejoice to see the day when the advantages of the liberty of the press shall be unalloyed with those evils of its licentiousness, which, without some expedient of control, will prevail, as long as there are, on one hand, indigent and avaricious publishers, and, on the other, factious and unprincipled readers.

But innovations in a particular intimately connected with civil liberty, will ever be guarded against in a free country, with all the vigilance of jealous circumspection. Men will often patiently support the present evil, the nature and extent of which is ascertained by experience, rather than incur the hazard of a future detriment, which may possibly outweigh the beneficial ends proposed. If then the unrestrained use of the press is, as it has been commonly termed, the palladium of liberty, may it never be taken from us by fraud or force! and perhaps the evils resulting from the abuse of this privilege are of that kind, which, when permitted to take their course, ultimately remedy themselves: for it is certain, that there may be a period, and perhaps our own times approach to it, when the petulant licentiousness of public prints and pamphlets becomes too contemptible to gain attention, and therefore fails of producing a malignant effect. Avarice will cease to publish, when men are too wise to purchase; faction and vanity will be silent, when they no longer find an audience: but penal and coercive measures are known to give weight to the nonsense of sedition, corruption, and impiety, by alarming that attention which it could not otherwise excite, and to occasion the evils in-

tended to be obviated; as the means used to extinguish a flame sometimes increase its violence.

But referring the discussion of this complicated subject to legislative wisdom, we may venture to express an honest wish without danger of presumption, and surely all the good and enlightened part of mankind will sympathize in the desire, that the time will not be distant, when the qualities of the heart shall be cultivated with the same general ardour as the powers of the understanding; when the affectation of singularity, and the love of money, shall no longer multiply treatises tending to teach the people a false philosophy, an erroneous belief, or a factious conduct; when the art of printing shall no more be perverted to embellish vice and justify folly; but operating in the accomplishment of its proper purposes, at once promote the interest, which cannot indeed without natural violence be separate, of sound learning, right reason, and unaffected virtue.

NO. CXXXVII.—CURSORY THOUGHTS ON SATIRE AND SATIRISTS.

THE good reception that species of poetry, called satire, has commonly met with in the world, is, perhaps, owing to some dispositions in the human nature not the most amiable. It derives not its power of pleasing, like other poetry, from its effects on the imagination. It raises few enchanting prospects; it is not necessarily employed in fiction. A spirit of indignation is its essential principle, and by causing a similar spirit in the reader, it gently gratifies the irascible and malignant passions.

It must be owned, that satire has seldom answered its ostensible end of reforming the age. Yet allow-

ing it to be of little use in reformation, it is often composed with such evident marks of genius as render it interesting to men of taste. And though spleen may have given rise to its first production, and the love of censure ensured its success, yet the beauties of the composition will cause it to be read, even by those who disapprove personal invective, long after the resentment that occasioned it has subsided.

Horace, the politest writer whom the world ever produced, adopted satirical writing, and succeeded in it, though there is every reason to believe that his natural disposition was not severe. The truth is, he was a man of the world, as well as a man of reflection, and wrote his remarks on men and things in familiar verse; not without censuring them indeed, but without indulging the asperity of sarcasm. He probed every wound with so gentle a hand, that the patient smiled under the operation. The gay friend of Mæcenas had lived in courts, and knew too much of the world to think he could reform the voluptuous part of it by abrupt and unqualified severity.

Not so the stern Juvenal. With all the warmth of a zealot in the cause of virtue, he pours his majestic verse, and, amid the most spirited invective and the finest morality, emits many a luminous irradiation of poetry beautifully descriptive.

His predecessor Persius had afforded him a noble model. He improved on it in nothing but perspicuity. Persius is all fire, spirit, animation. The frequency of his interrogations rouses the attention of the reader, and it is not easy to read and understand him without catching the glow with which he evidently wrote. If his obscurity rose from fear, it does not indeed depreciate his merit as a writer; but it has caused him to be less read and admired

than he deserves. The last lines of his second satire are alone sufficient to entitle him to immortality.

The English seem to have copied the manner of Juvenal rather than of Horace. Our national spirit is indeed of the manly and rougher kind, and feels something congenial with itself in the vehemence of the indignant Juvenal.

The Roman is remarkably harmonious. But Donne, his imitator, seems to have thought roughness of verse, as well as of sentiment, a real grace. It is scarcely possible, that a writer who did not studiously avoid a smooth versification, could have written so many lines without stumbling on a good one. Pope has revived his fame by attuning his harsh numbers; a work whose very excellence makes us regret that a genius so fertile as was the bard's of Twickenham, should have wasted its vigour in paraphrases and translations.

This versatile poet has imbibed the very spirit of Horace. Nor can the mere English reader obtain, by the translations of Creech or of Francis, so clear and adequate an idea of the true Horatian manner, as from the liberal imitations of Pope.

Dryden seems to have preferred the model of his favourite Juvenal. His nervous line was well adapted to satirical composition. He says himself, "he could write severely, with more ease than he could write gently." His Absalom and Achitophel, and his Mac Flecknoe, are master-pieces and models in the serious and vehement kind of satire.

Boileau seems to have blended with judgement the manner of Horace and Juvenal. Yet, whatever degree of elegance he possesses, the natural monotony of French verse tires an ear accustomed to the various harmony of our English poet. The French language never appears so mean as in the heroic couplet. He who reads the Henriade, and at the

same time thinks of Milton, Dryden, Garth, or Pope, must close the volume with all the loathing of disgust. He who reads Boileau, will find his improving imitator, Pope, rise in his opinion. Pope rouses the attention by all the changes of musical modulation; Boileau soothes it to dull repose by the lullaby of similar pauses uniformly repeated.

A poet of our own, little attended to at present, once enjoyed a very high degree of fame as a satirical writer. Oldham has been called the English Juvenal. His satire on the Jesuits has indeed much of the spirit of Juvenal. It displays wit, force, pungency, and a very copious invention; but it is no less distinguished by a vulgarity, which must prevent Oldham from keeping his place among the classics of our country. He has lashed the Jesuits with deserved and unrelenting rigour; but though severe punishment is often necessary, yet to see it inflicted with the wanton cruelty of an assassin, is not agreeable. There are some works of poetry, as well as of painting, which, though well performed as pieces of art, lose the praise their excellence demands, by the shocking nature of their representations.

A later satirist, Dr. Young, is still read with pleasure. But he has the fault of Seneca, of Ovid, of Cowley, a profuse and unseasonable application of wit. His satires have been justly called a string of epigrams. A lover of originality, he did not regard models. Had he endeavoured to imitate Juvenal or Persius, he would have avoided this fault. Those great masters were too much engrossed by the importance of their subjects to fall into the puerility of witticism. There is also something in Young's versification which a good ear does not approve.

But even Young, popular as he was, has been eclipsed by a poet who has shone with the effulgence

and the instability of a meteor. Churchill possessed merit; a merit which was magnified when seen through the medium of party, beyond that degree which it was able to support. When reason at last viewed what passion had exaggerated, she was disgusted with the disappointment, and turned away with neglect. Thus the celebrated Churchill, with whose applause the town re-echoed, is sinking to an oblivion which he hardly deserves; for though he wrote many careless lines and many dull passages, yet the greater part of his productions displayed a genuine vein of satirical genius.

Within a few years satire has reassumed her original rude form of scurrilous and petulant abuse. An improved versification has given a gloss to illiberal, calumnious, and anonymous invectives. An undaunted effrontery, recommended by elegant verse, has supplied the want of every classical and noble ornament. That it has been well received is no proof of its solid excellence as composition, since, to the greater part of readers, the abuse which it lavishly pours on public and private characters and *cotemporaries*, is a sufficient recommendation.

It differs from classical satire in this as well as other circumstances. Horace, Persius, Juvenal, though sometimes shockingly disgraced by obscenity, yet abound with fine moral sentiments. They not only put vice to shame, but countenanced virtue, and pointed out the way to attain it. But the satirists of our times seem to have little else in view than to gratify private pique, or party prejudice. It is indeed scarcely to be expected, that, in a degenerate age, many will be found to possess dignity of character and solidity of judgement, in a degree sufficient to enable them to stand forth disinterested and efficient censors of prevailing folly and fashionable vice. Let it ever be remembered, that spite is

not legitimate satire, and that personal or party malice are themselves proper objects of a Juvenal's severest invective.

NO. CXXXVIII.—ON LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS.

To false and careless reasoning most of the misfortunes of life are to be attributed. Logic then, as an art, is perhaps so far useful in the conduct of life, as it superinduces a habit of accurate reasoning.

But what says experience? Is the man who has digested Burgersdicius found to be wiser in his actions than others? The best disputant that ever conquered in the schools, when he has descended to the walks of common life, has been found no less prone to deviate into the paths of error, to be involved in the clouds of passion, and misled by the false lights of imagination, than the busy multitude who never heard of the categories.

They who possess common sense in a competent degree, will discover, with no other aid, the fallacy of wrong reasoning. They who are deficient in it, will not find a substitute in the use of a syllogism.

The great numbers who supply civil and commercial offices, in which there is a constant necessity for the exertion of reason, and who conduct the most important affairs without the aid of scholastic logic, are proofs that vigorous nature wants not this slender assistance. To imagine that a well-formed mind cannot reason well without logic, is no less absurd, than to suppose that the solid oak wants the support of the ivy that creeps around it.

The best school for the improvement of reason, after a competent education, is the living world.

We find even the illiterate, who have spent their lives in constant action, possessing a very extensive knowledge of things, and a most accurate method of judging of them; a knowledge and a method which the cultivated but inexperienced reasoner can seldom attain. It is common to see the learned academic, whose labours are at last rewarded by a rural benefice, unable, notwithstanding his acquired strength of reason, to cope with the rude rustic in a bargain for dues which the laws have allotted him.

It seems, then, that the gradual decay of scholastic logic, and the contempt in which syllogistic skill is held, are not unreasonable. It contributes little to the benefit of society. It is rather injurious to it by drawing off that attention which might be usefully bestowed. What then shall we say? Must an art, which our forefathers have studied from age to age, and to which many of us have devoted our first years at the universities, be exploded? A veneration is due to long-established opinions. The powers of judging, which stimulate the present age to innovation, were possessed by the past in equal perfection. They had some reason for their institutions. The same reason may perhaps remain to prevent the total abolition of them; for truth and reason are unchangeable. Our ancestors established logical studies in the universities, because in their days there were few other books to be obtained, and no other learning was prized. Their descendants must continue to bestow on them a moderate attention, because every part of knowledge contributes to accomplish the professed scholar. But they need give no more than a moderate attention, because the improvements of philosophy, and the great multiplication of books in every part of human learning, ena-

ble the student to spend his time and exercise his sagacity more usefully and more agreeably.

For metaphysics what can be said? If every book that has been written on them, and thousands have been written, were annihilated, not a single individual in the great community of all mankind, would in any one respect have just reason to lament the loss. Mathematical and arithmetical studies are speculative, it is true; but they do not terminate in speculation. They afford a great pleasure, abstractedly considered, by the full evidence with which they display their truths; but they tend to obvious utility as well as to delight. The builder, the navigator, almost every mechanic art, is assisted by geometry; and all men, without exception, are benefited by arithmetic. But metaphysics tend only to benight the understanding in a cloud of its own making, and to lose it in a labyrinth of its own contrivance.

Metaphysics were once encouraged and cultivated, because they served the purposes of superstition. They involved theological subjects in a perplexity which the simple could not unravel. They gave an air of mystery and depth, which caught the admiration of the vulgar. They are now employed, in a similar manner, in the service of infidelity. They have induced the half-learned and the conceited, those who think they understand them, and those who wish to be thought by others to understand them, to adopt, without being apprehensive of danger, opinions fatal to their own happiness and to the existence of society.

Even when cultivated by the honest and truly ingenious, they exhibit an instance of blameable pride. They aim at a science to which man can never attain. It is truly laughable to observe a creature, with hardly knowledge enough of the things around

him to guide him with safety, perplexing himself with ontological inquiries into the nature of angels, and the essence of the devil.

The ontologists and pneumatologists, the *nominales* and *reales*, the *doctores seraphici*, and all the tribe of microscopic philosophers, are, in the present age of discernment, totally neglected. Even Malebranche and Locke, the most rational of the metaphysicians, are daily losing ground. As a task, they are attended to in the public seminaries, where some obsolete plan of study requires metaphysical exercises; but the multitude of more agreeable works seldom leaves time or inclination, to the student who is at liberty to choose his books, for the controversy concerning innate ideas. A few, however, in the present times, have been so unfortunate as to waste their labour in defending materialism, in diffusing scepticism, and in proving that man is no more than an animal. This last sentence and this doctrine may probably induce them to prove, in their own instances, that man is an *irritable animal*. Nothing is more easily provoked than pride of intellect.

To put an end to speculative error, it might, perhaps, in some degree, be effectual to lay less stress upon metaphysics in academical education. Those who preside over our seminaries are no less liberal than enlightened, and will surely, on some future day, if any part of the present system of instruction is trifling or pernicious, renounce it with alacrity. But a proper deference to their respectable opinions renders it reasonable to suppose, that an attention to this abstruse, though otherwise useless science, may tend to give the young mind a habit of thinking with depth and precision. As a severe discipline, it may be advantageous. Many a manœuvre is taught the soldier in his course of preparation for

war, which will seldom be useful in the field of battle.

All those who have little opportunity of being actively serviceable to others, have an unquestionable right to seek amusement in abstruse speculation, or in any other pastime which is innocent. They may puzzle themselves for diversion even in metaphysics. But if, in the course of their inquiries, they should fall upon a wonderful discovery, which, when divulged, would disturb the happy ignorance of mankind, let them for once be selfish, enjoy it in private, and withhold it from the community.

NO. CXXXIX.—ON LATIN VERSE AS AN EXERCISE AT SCHOOLS.

No part of classical education has been more generally censured and more firmly adhered to, than that of exercising boys in the composition of Latin poetry. The trite remark, that a poet is born, and not formed by discipline, has been urged against it. It has also been alleged, that the time bestowed on it would be more advantageously spent in the study of things, and in acquiring a right method of expressing our sentiments in humble prose. It is absurd enough, say the objectors, to exact a certain portion of English verse from the scholar; but to perplex him with Latin verse, at a time when he might be learning a thousand useful things; what is it but extreme imprudence, countenanced indeed by general practice, but nevertheless both culpable and truly ridiculous?

They allow, however, that the custom is general, and of long duration. Surely then that degree of respect is due to the general opinion of mankind,

and to the wisdom of our predecessors, which leads us to presume, that there must have been some benefit perceived by experience from an institution thus ancient and universal. And it is natural to consider, whether a few arguments may not be found in favour of a mode silently and uniformly pursued, amid the loud clamour every where raised against it.

The defenders of practices unjustly censured, often do an injury to their cause, by admitting none of the objections to be reasonable. We will then allow, that to learn to make Latin verse is to lose time, when the scholar is destined to spend his life in commercial or in mechanical employments. But at the same time, we must insist on its utility to the man of independent fortune, to the divine, the lawyer, the physician, and to every gentleman who aspires at the character of an accomplished or polite scholar.

To all these, an acquaintance with the classics will add an elegance, such as tends to complete their characters as gentlemen as well as scholars. It is the finishing polish of education, and operates on the mind, like dancing on the person, by superadding a graceful habit. But there is no method so well calculated to infuse an intimate knowledge of an author, as to imitate and endeavour to rival his excellences. To write Virgilian verse with true elegance, it is necessary to commit to memory every phrase; to catch the very spirit of Virgil; to mark the varied pauses of his verses, the length of his periods, the peculiar grace of his expressions; and to give the whole composition a majestic dignity. All these requisites to poetical composition in Latin, can be acquired only by a frequent and attentive perusal of the noble Mantuan.

The first-fruits of genius produced by the finest

writers that adorn our annals, were compositions in Latin verse. Milton, at a boyish age, wrote it with great elegance. Cowley excelled in it early. Addison was much celebrated for his juvenile essays in it. Prior began with writing Latin epigrams. All the great men who have been educated at public schools, where it is invariably an exercise, were, during several years, obliged to compose it as a daily task; and though many of them were never distinguished as poets, yet they derived considerable advantages from their attempts in Latin, as will probably appear from the following reflections.

Difficulty is naturally painful; but to overcome it causes a very sensible pleasure, and facilitates future conquests, by adding courage. To write Latin verse, is certainly an arduous task to a young boy; but the authority of his master, and a spirit of emulation, urge him to attempt with alacrity what his own indolence would have led him to neglect. Long practice gives facility. He finds he has overcome what he once thought insurmountable. When any new undertaking offers itself in future with a difficult and forbidding aspect, he is not affrighted; for he recollects that he has already performed that which appeared to him impracticable. The exertion necessary to accomplish what is not easy, has a natural tendency to give the mind fresh vigour.

A subject taken from a classic, a moral sentiment, or an ingenious remark, is given to a boy as a subject of meditation to employ his leisure during the intervals of school. He is taught that there must be an unity in his design; that he must invent a thought, on which he is to display, if he can, good sense and Augustan wit, expressed in the most elegant versification. This tends to give a knowledge of things, at the same time that it renders it necessary to call to his assistance all his classical phrase-

ology. He must revolve many ideas in his mind before this thought occurs. In this process he exercises the powers of judgement, of discrimination, of taste. He recollects all his reading, he reviews all he has seen and heard, he searches his books on similar topics, and at once improves what he has obtained, and makes new acquisitions.

He who has been conversant in great schools will have seen copies of verses written as the exercises of an evening, in which were displayed wit, humour, fine language, ingenious turns, harmonious verse, and very shrewd observations on men and things. Such were the Lusus Westmonasterienses; such were many in the Musæ Etonenses; and such are thousands that have never yet been offered to the public view. It is a known truth, that many of the boys who were engaged in these useful sports of a fertile genius, afterwards became distinguished members of the literary or the political republic; and they owed much of that good reception which they met with in the world, to the fame and merit of classical scholarship acquired at their school.

Every liberal scholar desires to extend his views, and to be enabled to derive literary pleasure from all that is capable of affording it. If he has formed no taste for modern Latin poetry, he will be a stranger to many most pleasing productions. But he cannot have a just relish for them, unless he has a knowledge of prosody, and of their various metres; and of these he can seldom have a perfect knowledge, such a knowledge as will enable him to judge of their finer graces, without having composed Latin poetry as an exercise at school.

It is certain, that none of the modern Latinists have equalled Virgil and Horace, and that the classical student can no where find entertainment so unmixed as in their original writings. But the

daintiest fare that an Apicius ever invented, ceased to please when constantly repeated. Nor can he be said to have an undistinguishing taste, or a bad ear, who seeks variety in the warblings of the Virgilian Vida, and the sweet strains of our own Vincent Bourne. There is often a happy union of the beauties that distinguish Ovid, Tibullus, and Martial, in the Carmina Quadragesimalia. Rapin, Vanier, Buchanan, and Browne, seem to have written Latin verse with an ease, which would almost lead to a supposition that Latin was their vernacular language. In miscellaneous publications of our own and other nations, the man of taste will find a multitude of poëmata, which he may read with pleasure, and without danger of corrupting the purity of his style.

Merely as the means of enjoying an elegant and innocent pleasure in greater perfection, of filling up a leisure hour with a classical amusement, the composition of Latin verse may be justly recommended to the affluent and the generous youth, who enjoys, and knows how to value, a liberal education. Others, it must be owned, will be much better employed in learning their pence-table.

NO. CXL.—ON THE INSENSIBILITY OF THE MEN TO THE CHARMS OF A FEMALE MIND CULTIVATED WITH POLITE AND SOLID LITERATURE. [IN A LETTER.]

Sir,

I am the only daughter of a clergyman, who, on the death of my mother, which happened when I was about three years old, concentrated his affections on me, and thought he could not display his

love more effectually than in giving me a good education. His house was situated in a solitary village, and he had but little parochial duty, so that there was scarcely any thing to divert his attention from this object. He had ever been devoted to letters, and considered learning, next to virtue, as the noblest distinction of human nature.

As soon as I could read, I was initiated in Lilly's Grammar, and, before I was eight years old, could repeat every rule in it with the greatest accuracy. I was taught indeed needle-work, and the usual female accomplishments; but two hours in every day were invariably set apart for my improvement in Latin. I soon perfected myself in the elementary parts, and had read Phædrus and Cornelius Nepos with a strict attention to the grammatical construction of every word and phrase which they contained. From these I was advanced to Virgil and Horace. Under the direction of so good a classic as my father, I soon acquired a taste for their beauties, and not only read them through with great delight, but committed their more beautiful passages to memory.

My father was so well pleased with my proficiency, and with the task of instructing the object of his tenderest love, that he resolved to carry my improvements higher, and to open to my view the spacious fields of Grecian literature. The Greek Grammar I mastered with great ease, and I found a sweetness in the language which amply repaid me for the little difficulties I sometimes encountered. From the Greek Testament I proceeded to the Cyropædia of Xenophon, the Orations of Demosthenes, the Dialogues of Plato, the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and the Odes of Pindar. That I received great improvement from this course, cannot be denied; but the pleasure of it alone was to me a sufficient reward. I was enabled to drink at the foun-

tain-head, while others were obliged to content themselves with the distant and polluted stream. I found that no translations whatever, however accurately they might exhibit the sense of originals, could express the beauties of the language. I was possessed of a power of inspecting those volumes, in admiration of which the world has long agreed, but from which my sex has been for the most part unreasonably excluded. It was a noble privilege, and I value myself upon it; but I hope and believe I did not despise those who had not partaken of it.

The French and Italian languages became easy after my acquaintance with the Latin, and my father was of opinion that they are indispensably necessary to the modern scholar. In French I read Rollin, Boileau, Fontenelle, Voiture, Bouhours, Bruyere, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Marmontel; in Italian, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, Guicciardin, and the Cortegiano of Castiglione. All these gave me a degree of pleasure, which I am sure none would be without who are capable of obtaining it.

After having laid a foundation in the languages, which I believe is seldom done with success but at an early age, my father allowed me to feast without control on the productions of my own country. The learning I had acquired enabled me to read them critically. The best writers abound so much in quotations, that I cannot help thinking that they who are unacquainted with the ancient languages, must often be mortified at their inability to unlock the concealed treasure.

All the classical poets, from Shakespeare to Pope, were my study and delight. History, which my father always recommended as peculiarly suited to adorn the female mind, was a favourite pursuit. I took a peculiar pleasure in every biographical anecdote I could collect. After reading a life, or the

history of any particular event, I was always desired by my father to give my sentiments upon it in writing; an exercise which I found to be attended with great advantage.

I never penetrated deeply into the sciences, yet I could not rest satisfied without a superficial knowledge of astronomy, of the solar system, of experimental philosophy, and of geography, mathematical, physical, and political. This little was necessary for rational conversation, and I had neither time nor taste for scientific refinements. Poetry was my delight, and I sometimes wrote it, as the partiality of my poor father led him to assert, in a pleasing manner.

I do not make it a merit of my own, because it was entirely owing to my father's direction, that with all my attention to books, I paid as much attention to music and dancing as others of my age. My father excelled in music, and he taught me to play on the piano forte. He engaged a good master to instruct me in dancing, and he always cautioned me against that neglect of dress and of accurate neatness, which, he said, had sometimes involved literary ladies in deserved disgrace. He likewise inculcated the necessity of avoiding a pedantic manner of conversation, and strictly charged me never to be overbearing, or to show in the company of others the least appearance of conscious superiority. I believe I may venture to say, that I strictly complied with his directions, and that I talked with perfect ease among the superficial, and neither expressed nor felt contempt, except where vanity and affectation were combined with ignorance.

Yet, notwithstanding my improvements, and my earnest endeavours to prevent them from becoming invidious, I find myself received in the world with less cordiality than I had reason to expect. My

own sex stand too much in awe of me to bear me any affection. When I come into their company, an universal silence would prevail, if it were not interrupted by myself. Though I cannot say that I am treated rudely, yet I can easily perceive that the civilities I receive are constrained; and I have every reason to believe, that no small pains are taken to traduce my character, and to ridicule my taste in dress, and all the circumstances of external behaviour. It is kindly hinted, that a little awkwardness and impropriety may be excused in a learned lady, and that dress and decorum are beneath the notice of a poetess and Latin scholar.

I have no reason to think that my person is particularly disagreeable; yet I know not how it is, I am avoided by gentlemen, who are ambitious of the company of other ladies. They have dropt, in the hearing of some of my friends, that though they think me extremely clever, yet they cannot reconcile the ideas of female attractions and the knowledge of the Greek. They do not mean to detract from my praise; but they must own, that I am not the woman after their hearts. They entertain a notion, that a lady of improved understanding will not submit to the less dignified cares of managing a household. She knows how to make verses, says some witty beau, but give me the woman who can make a figure at a rout or an assembly.

I must confess, I ever thought it the most valuable recommendation of a wife to be capable of becoming a conversable companion to her husband. A woman of improved understanding and real sense is more likely to submit to her condition, whatever it may be, than the uneducated or the half-learned; and such a one will always be willing to superintend œconomy when it becomes her duty; and to take an active part in household management, when

the happiness of him she loves, and of herself, depends upon her personal interference.

The education of children in the earlier periods, particularly of daughters, naturally belongs to the mother. Her inclination to improve them, seconded by her ability to take the proper methods, must be attended with the most valuable effects. The world is acquainted with the happy consequences of a Cornelia's parental care. But it seems probable, that little nourishment of mind can be imbibed from a mother, whose ideas hardly ever wandered beyond the limits of a dressing-room or an assembly. Neither is there sufficient reason to conclude, that she whose intellectual acquisitions enable her to entertain her husband, and to form the minds of her children, must be incapable or unwilling to superintend the table, and give a personal attention to domestic œconomy.

That learning belongs not to the female character, and that the female mind is not capable of a degree of improvement equal to that of the other sex, are narrow and unphilosophical prejudices. The present times exhibit most honourable instances of female learning and genius. The superior advantages of boys' education are, perhaps, the sole reason of their subsequent superiority. Learning is equally attainable, and, I think, equally valuable, for the satisfaction arising from it, to a woman as a man. For my own part, I would not lose the little I possess, to avoid all those disagreeable consequences of which I have just now complained. But can it, *ought* it to be a misfortune to possess a cultivated mind? Does it not argue a want of sense and refinement, when men and women despise and avoid those who have devoted their lives to the improvement of their understandings and the correction of their tempers?

NO. CXLI.—ON PARENTAL INDULGENCE.

The love of progeny seems to operate as strongly in the brute creation as in the human species, during the helpless age of immaturity. The guidance of instinct, indeed, as it is more decisively determinate, seems to bring up an offspring with less deviation from the purposes of nature than the superior faculty of reason. The greater acuteness of reason leads to hesitation, and involves in error, while it is distracted by the variety of objects it assembles for its choice. The bird never injures its young by repletion. The young, indeed, of few animals, when left to the care of the parent, without the interference of man, is found to perish. But it is well known how large a proportion of children die in the metropolis under the age of two years. The cause is in general the neglect of nature for the aids of art, proceeding from a degree of fondness which stimulates the parent to take all the care upon herself, and to leave little to the invisible process of natural energies.

If the child survive by the vigour of its constitution to a puerile age, even then the fondness of the parent, amiable in its origin, but injurious to the object it most wishes to benefit, is found to destroy the very purposes of living, by endeavouring to render life pleasurable to excess, and without vicissitude. If his absence can be so far borne as to permit him to enter at a school, an earnest desire is expressed that he may be indulged in all those luxuries of the table which pollute the pure stream of the infant blood, and, by overloading the organs of intellect, preclude the possibility of solid improvement. He, whose attention should be engrossed by his book, and who should learn to look on every

pleasure of the senses as a subordinate pleasure, is often taught, by the over-weening attachment of a parent, to have little other care than to pamper the grossest among the animal appetites.

Regularity of diet, and modest decency in all the circumstances of scholastic life, are often represented as the result of a too penurious œconomy; and the young pupil no sooner returns, in the days of vacation, to his paternal roof, than he is crammed with delicacies, to compensate the penance he has undergone at the place of his education.

We can derive but little improvement from the teacher we contemn. Yet how can the boy avoid contempt for the master, whom he is taught to consider as capable of depriving the child committed to his care of his proper sustenance? But they who are sensible in other respects, are rendered, by their fondness, weak enough to believe any calumny which a froward child utters for the sake of changing his place of education, or of remaining at home.

The propensity to indulgence is so strong, that at the maturest age, and with the most improved reason, it is difficult to restrain it within the limits of moderation. To encourage, instead of checking, this natural tendency, is, in effect, to nurse those vices of the future youth, and to cause those excesses of early manhood, which, in the end, hasten the grey hairs of the inconsiderate parent with sorrow to the grave. Few would be profligate in the extreme, if they were not untaught all the virtue they learn under their tutors, by the example and inadvertence of their own family. When immorality is obliquely recommended by a father's practice, the infection is irresistible. A tutor's admonitions are soon supposed to proceed merely from official care, when they contradict the conduct of

him whom a child naturally loves, and ought to revere, above all others.

The general custom of allowing a very large weekly stipend, and of giving pecuniary presents to the schoolboy, often frustrates the intentions of education. It is not likely that he should give his thoughts to literary improvement, who is obliged to study how he shall spend the bounty of his aunts and cousins; and whose pocket always enables him to find recreation without seeking it in books. It would be happy if things could be contrived, that, for want of employment, he should be driven to those volumes where employment of the pleasantest kind may be always found, attended with the most valuable advantages. A profusion of money at a childish age is not uncommonly the cause of subsequent extravagance, and tends to introduce one of the most pernicious and least curable vices, a propensity to gaming. But reasoning can avail little against the partiality of some fond relation, who cannot suffer present pleasure to be neglected by her favourite, for the sake of an advantage which is distant and uncertain.

It is usually supposed that maternal affection is stronger than paternal. There is no doubt but that it often interposes in adjusting the plan of education. Its kind solicitude is too amiable to be censured with asperity. Yet we must assert, that it is not possible that a mother, though sensible and accomplished, should be so well qualified to direct the care of a boy's education in all its parts, as a father of equal abilities. All the important departments in civil life are filled by men. The pulpit, the bar, the senate-house, are appropriated to men. Men, from the facility with which they travel, and their superior hardiness, see more of the world than women, who, with the same opportunities, might

indeed make the same observations; but who, in the present state of things, cannot judge of those qualifications, attainments, manners, and characters, which recommend to notice in all the professions of life, and tend to ensure success in education as well as in the paths of ambition. Hence it is that they are observed to set the highest value on ornamental accomplishments, of the grace of which their fine taste is peculiarly sensible; and to under-rate the more solid attainments, with the utility and beauty of which their situation often keeps them unacquainted. Many a fond and sensible mother has controverted the necessity of learning Latin, as a *dead* language, in which there can be no use, while the living languages of France and Italy are more easily attainable, and infinitely more fashionable. Such a judgement is not to be wondered at; nor does it proceed from natural weakness, but from an unavoidable ignorance of the beauties of the classics, and the utility of Latin in the practice of every liberal art, in the conversation of the enlightened, and in the study of the most admired modern books, which abound in Latin quotations, in allusions to the ancients, and in words which cannot be fully comprehended without understanding the language from which they are derived.

Add to this, that the extreme tenderness of maternal affection will not permit that strict discipline to be exercised on a beloved son, which, though it has nothing in it of harsh severity, resembles not the soft and indulgent treatment of the mother or nurse. Scarcely any thing of value is brought to perfection without some care analogous to this scholastic discipline. The tree will not produce its fruits in sufficient abundance, or with a proper flavour, unless it is chastised in its luxuriances by the hand of art. It is requisite that the stubborn soil

should be broken by cultivation. The most serviceable animals are either useless or hurtful, till reduced to obedience by coercion. Man, above all, possessed as he is of stronger powers and acuter perceptions, of ill qualities, no less than good, in a superior degree, requires all the aids of art to correct his enormities, and teach him to act a rational and consistent part in the theatre of the world. Although the infliction of salutary discipline may give pain even to those who know it to be salutary, yet they must not, for the sake of sparing their own feelings, act in contradiction to their judgement, and do an irreparable injury to those whom they most tenderly love. Excessive lenity and indulgence are ultimately excessive rigour.

With the excellent effects of Spartan discipline every one is acquainted. Of the lamentable consequences of modern relaxation, daily experience furnishes examples. The puerile age is patient and tractable. Reformation must begin there. Temperance, diligence, modesty, and humility, cannot be too early inculcated. These will lead through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour and happiness. In this progress, strict discipline will sometimes be necessary; but let not the pretence of proper correction give an opportunity for the gratification of vindictive cruelty. Inhumanity, even in a Busby, admits not of palliation.

NO. CXLII.—ON THE POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ROWLEY.

THERE are many truths which we firmly believe, though we are unable to refute every argument which the extreme subtilty of learning and ingenu-

ity may advance to invalidate them. When I read the researches of those antiquaries who have endeavoured to prove, that the poems attributed to Rowley were really written by him, I observe many ingenious remarks in confirmation of their opinion, which it would be tedious, if not difficult, to controvert. But I no sooner turn to the poems, than the labour of the antiquaries appears only a waste of time and labour, and I am involuntarily forced to join in placing that laurel, which he seems so^{nly} to have deserved, on the brow of Chatterton.

The poems, called the Poems of Rowley, bear so many marks of superior genius, that they have deservedly excited the general attention of polite scholars, and are considered as the most remarkable productions in modern poetry. We have many instances of poetical eminence at an early age; but neither Cowley, Milton, nor Pope, ever produced any thing, while they were boys, which can justly be compared to the poems of Chatterton. The learned antiquaries do not indeed dispute their excellence. They extol it in the highest terms of applause. They raise their favourite Rowley to a rivalry with Homer; but they make the very merit of the works an argument against the real author. Is it possible, say they, that a boy could produce compositions so beautiful and so masterly? That a common boy should produce them is not possible; but that they should be produced by a boy of an extraordinary genius, such a genius as was that of Homer and Shakespeare; such a genius as appears not above once in many centuries; though a prodigy, is such a one as by no means exceeds the bounds of rational credibility.

That Chatterton was such a genius, his manners and his life in some degree evince. He had all the tremulous sensibility of genius, all its eccentrici-

ties, all its pride, and all its spirit. Even his death, unfortunate and deplorable as it was, displayed a haughtiness of soul, which urged him to spurn a world where even his exalted genius could not vindicate him from contempt, indigence, and contumely.

Against the opinion of his superiority of genius, the miscellanies which he published in a periodical pamphlet are triumphantly produced. But what proof is there that all which are attributed to him are really his own? They are collected after his death; collected, I suppose, by conjecture, and published in a separate volume, with all the typographical errata of the hasty pamphlets from which they are reprinted. But in many of the pieces which were confessedly written by him, there are marks of genius not indeed equal to those of the counterfeit Rowley, but such as prove, that the boy who wrote them could write better. In composing the ancient poems all his attention had been exerted. It was the first, and seems to have been the greatest, object of his life, to raise himself to future eminence by the instrumentality of a fictitious poet of a former age. Nights, if not days, were devoted to the work; for we have it on record, that he used to sit awake in his chamber during the silence of midnight. But the little compositions which he wrote for the magazines, were either written in a careless mood, when he relaxed his mind from his grand work, or in a moment of distress, when an extemporary essay, or copy of verses, was necessary to procure him a half-penny roll and a draught of small beer. When he found that the editors were more desirous of quantity than quality, and, amidst the numerous volunteers in their service, seemed backward to engage with one who wanted a stipend, he foresaw that even the little which nature required

would not be supplied.—He saw, and resigned his indignant spirit.

Unfortunate boy! short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal. Hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius——

Unfortunate boy! poorly wast thou accommodated during thy short sojourning among us;—rudely wast thou treated,—sorely did thy feeling soul suffer from the scorn of the unworthy; and there are, at last, those who wish to rob thee of thy only meed, thy posthumous glory. Severe too are the censurers of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts, which none can defend, and which neither thy youth, nor thy fiery spirit, nor thy situation, can excuse. But let thy more rigid censors reflect, that thou wast literally and strictly but a boy. Let many of thy bitterest enemies reflect what were their own religious principles, and whether they had any, at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Surely it is a severe and unjust surmise, that thou wouldst probably have ended thy life as a victim of the laws, if thou hadst not finished it as thou didst; since the very act by which thou durst put an end to thy painful existence, proves, that thou thoughtest it better to die, than to support life by theft or violence.

The speculative errors of a boy who wrote from the sudden suggestions of passion or despondency, who is not convicted of any immoral or dishonest act in consequence of his speculations, ought to be consigned to oblivion. But there seems to be a general and inveterate dislike to the boy, exclusively of the poet; a dislike which many will be ready to impute, and, indeed, not without the appearance of reason, to that insolence and envy of the little great, which cannot bear to acknowledge so transcendent

and commanding a superiority in the humble child of want and obscurity.

Malice, if there was any, may surely now be at rest; for "Cold he lies in the grave below." But where were ye, O ye friends to genius, when, stung with disappointment, distressed for food and raiment, with every frightful form of human misery painted on his fine imagination, poor Chatterton sunk in despair? Alas! ye knew him not then, and now it is too late,—

For now he is dead;
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow tree.

So sang the hapless youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart.*

In return for the pleasure I have received from thy poems, I pay thee, poor boy, the trifling tribute of my praise. Thyself thou hast emblazoned; thine own monument thou hast erected. But they whom thou hast delighted, feel a pleasure in vindicating thine honours from the rude attacks of detraction. Thy sentiments, thy verse, thy rhythm, all are modern, all are thine. By the help of glossaries and dictionaries, and the perusal of many old English writers, thou hast been able to translate the language of the present time into that of former centuries. Thou hast built an artificial ruin. The stones are mossy and old, the whole fabric appears really antique to the distant and the careless spectator; even the connoisseur, who pores with spectacles on the single stones, and inspects the mossy concretions with an antiquarian eye, boldly authenticates its antiquity; but they who examine without prejudice, and by the criterion of common sense,

* Some part of the above essay has been inscribed on a monument erected to Chatterton, without any acknowledgment of the plagiarism.

clearly discover the cement and the workmanship of a modern mason.

But though I cannot entertain a doubt but that the poems were written by Chatterton, yet I mean not to dictate to others, nor will I engage in controversy. I have expressed my feelings as those of a reader, who, though he respects the study of antiquities, dislikes the blind prejudices of the mere antiquary. I leave the weapons of controversy to be wielded by those powerful champions in the cause of Chatterton, a Tyrwhitt, and a Warton. I give a single vote for Chatterton; but I can make no interest in his favour.

NO. CXLIII.—ON THE MORAL TENDENCY OF THE WRITINGS OF STERNE.

It is the privilege of genius, to gild, like the sun, every object on which it emits its lustre. If the influence of its light and heat be directed on deformity itself, something of an agreeable tinge is communicated; and that which naturally excites horror and aversion, begins at last to please. Genius, like the fabulous power of a Midas, seems to convert all it touches to gold, and, with the wonderful property of the philosopher's stone, to transmute the basest to the purest metal. Hence it has happened, that doctrines which common sense and common prudence have repudiated, are no sooner recommended by writers of genius, than they are received without debate, and admired as the ultimate discoveries of improved philosophy. Let the same opinions be advanced by a dull writer, and even the vain and the vicious, whom they tend to encourage,

will refute and disavow them, from principles of pride and of shame.

That Sterne possessed a fine particle of real genius, if our reason were disposed to deny it, our sensations on perusing him fully evince. It is, I think, an infallible proof of real genius, when a writer possesses the power of shaking the nerves, or of affecting the mind in the most lively manner, in a few words, and with the most perfect simplicity of language. Such a power conspicuously marks both a Shakespeare and a Sterne; though Sterne undoubtedly is far below Shakespeare in the scale of genius.

I am ready to allow to Sterne another and a most exalted merit, besides and above the praise of genius. There never was a heathen philosopher, of any age or nation, who has recommended in so affecting a manner the benignant doctrines of a general philanthropy. He has corrected the acrimony of the heart, smoothed the asperities of natural temper, and taught the milk of human kindness to flow all-cheerily (it is his own expression) in gentle and uninterrupted channels.

To have effected so amiable a purpose is a great praise, a distinguished honour. I lament that the praise is lessened and the honour sullied by many faults and many follies, which render the writings of Sterne justly and greatly reprehensible.

If we consider them as compositions, and are guided in our judgement by the dictates of sound criticism, and by those standards of excellence, the rectitude of which has been decided by the testimony of the politest ages, it will be necessary to pronounce on them a severe sentence. The great critic of antiquity required, as the necessary constituents of a legitimate composition, a beginning, a middle, and an end. I believe it will be dif-

ficult to find them in the chaotic confusion of Tristram Shandy. But, disregarding the tribunal of Aristotle, to which the modern pretenders to genius do not consider themselves as amenable, it will still be true, even by the decisions of reason and common sense, that his writings abound with faults.

Obscurity has always been deemed one of the greatest errors of which a writer can be guilty; and there have been few readers, except those who thought that the acknowledgement would derogate from their reputation for wisdom, who have not complained that Tristram Shandy is in many places disgustfully obscure.

The admirers of Sterne extol his wit. But I believe it will be found that his wit is of the lowest kind, and the easiest of invention; for is it not for the most part allusive obscenity? a species of wit to be found in its fullest perfection in the vulgarest and vilest haunts of vice? It is, indeed, easy to attract the notice and admiration of the youthful and the wanton, by exhibiting loose images under a transparent veil. It is true, indeed, there is usually a veil, and the decent are therefore tempted to read; but the veil, like the affected modesty of a courtezan, serves only as an artifice to facilitate corruption.

The praise of humour has been lavished on Sterne with peculiar bounty. If quaintness is humour, the praise is all his own, and let Cervantes and Fielding bow their heads to Sterne. They who admire Uncle Toby, Doctor Slop, and Corporal Trim, as natural characters, or as exhibiting true humour in their manners and conversations, are little acquainted with nature, and have no just taste for genuine humour. Where are the archetypes in real life? It is evident enough that the author meant to be hu-

morous, and many of his readers, in the abundance of their good-nature, have taken the will for the deed.

But till obscurity, till obscenity, till quaintness, till impudence, till oddity, and mere wantonness, wildness, and extravagance, are perfections in writing, Tristram Shandy cannot justly claim the rank to which it has been raised by folly and fashion, by caprice, libertinism, and ignorance. I know that this censure will be considered as blasphemy by the idolaters of Sterne; but I hope it will not sour that milk of human kindness which they have imbibed from his writings; and to an excessive degree of which many soft and effeminate persons affectedly pretend. Let their philanthropy repress awhile their resentment, and I will venture to predict, that time will insensibly strip the writer of those honours which never justly belonged to him.

But will you allow his sermons no merit? I allow some of them the merit of the pathetic; but the laborious attempts to be witty and humorous have spoiled the greater part of them. The appearance of sincerity is one of the best beauties of a sermon. But Sterne seems as if he were laughing at his audience, as if he had ascended the pulpit in a frolic, and preached in mockery. Had he, however, written nothing but his sermons, he certainly would not have been censured as the destroyer of the morals and the happiness of private life.

There are, indeed, exquisite touches of the pathetic interspersed throughout all his works. His pathetic stories are justly admired. The pathetic was the chief excellençe of his writings; his admirers will be displeased if one were to add, that it is the only one which admits of unalloyed applause. It is certainly this which chiefly adorns the Sentimental Journey; a work which, whatever are its merits,

has had a pernicious influence on the virtue, and consequently on the happiness, of public and private society.

That softness, that affected and excessive sympathy at first sight, that sentimental affection, which is but *lust in disguise*, and which is so strongly inspired by the Sentimental Journey and by Tristram Shandy, have been the ruin of thousands of our countrymen and countrywomen, who fancied that, while they were breaking the laws of God and man, they were actuated by the fine feelings of *sentimental affection*. How much are divorces multiplied since Sterne appeared!

Sterne himself, with all his pretensions, is said to have displayed in private life, an ill-temper and a hard heart; and I shall not hesitate to pronounce him, though many admire him as the first of philosophers, the grand promoter of adultery and every species of illicit commerce.

NO. CXLIV.—ON THE WEIGHT AND EFFICACY WHICH MORALITY MAY DERIVE FROM THE INFLUENCE AND EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT.

It is true, indeed, that the world abounds with moral instruction, and that there is scarcely any good thing so easily obtained as good advice; but it is no less true, that moral instruction and good advice are found to possess a very small degree of influence in the busy walks of active life. In the church, we hear the Scriptures read and sermons preached; in the library, we study and admire the morality of the philosophers; but how few, in the actual pursuits of ambition, of interest, of pleasure, and even in the common occupations and inter-

course of ordinary life, suffer their conduct to be regulated by the precept of a Solomon, of a Socrates, or of Him who was greater than either!

No sentence is triter, than that example is more powerful than precept; but when the example is set by the rich and the great, its influence on the herd of mankind becomes irresistible. What can books effect? what avail the gentle admonitions of the retired moralist, against the examples of lords, dukes, and East-India nabobs? Can the still, small voice of conscience be heard by those who live in the noise and tumult of pleasurable pursuits? or can the mild doctrines of the humble Jesus be attended to, amid the agitations of the gaming-table, and the debaucheries of a brothel? A vicious nobleman, or profligate man of fashion, contributes more to extirpate morality, and diminish the little portion of happiness which is allowed to mankind, than all the malignant writings of the sceptics, from Mandeville and Bolingbroke, down to the feeble, yet conceited writer, who insinuates his corrupt and infidel opinions under the fair semblance of an elegant history. I cannot help observing, when I think of this last and recent attempt, that it resembles that of the evil spirit, who, when he beguiled the mother of mankind, and ruined all her progeny, used the soft words of an affected eloquence. The serpent was however cursed; but the wily historian is invited to a court, rewarded with places of honour and advantage, and eagerly enrolled in the legislative body of a mighty and a Christian nation.

It is certainly true, that whenever a government bestows peculiar honour on men who have written against the religion of the country, and who have impiously fought against the King of kings, it must lose the respect and attachment of all good

men. The religion of a country is unquestionably worthy of more solicitude in its preservation than the political constitution, however excellent and admirable. Courts and politics, with all their pageantry and airs of importance, are trifles compared to that system of religion, on which depends the temporal and eternal welfare of every individual throughout the empire. What avails it, that victories are gained, if the prevailing principles and manners destroy our sweetest hopes; those which rely on the protection of a kind Providence, and those which cheer us in this vale of misery, by the bright gleams of a sun which shall rise to set no more?

But supposing the narrow-minded rulers of a country so involved in gaming, sensuality, and temporal concerns, as to view all religion as imposture, and all modes of faith as political contrivances; yet surely they act inconsistently with the dictates of their own mean and low species of wisdom, when they extirpate, by their example, that religion which they allow to be politically useful. What must the common people think, when notoriously profligate men are advanced to the head of a profession? They cannot but believe, that those who are reputed to be so much wiser than themselves, and who are evidently greater, in a worldly sense of the epithet, must have chosen that system of opinions, and that plan of conduct, which are most likely to be just and rational, safe and pleasant. "If my lord, or his grace," says the mechanic, "of whose wisdom listening senates stand in awe, is a debauchee and an infidel, I must conclude that my parish preacher, an obscure and homely man, is a hypocrite, religion a farce, morality a useless restraint on the liberty of nature. Welcome, then, universal libertinism! and let us hasten to the house

of the harlot; let us drink the sweet cup of intoxication; let us scorn the creeping manners of vulgar industry, and, like men of spirit, seek our fortunes with a pistol on the highway."

We will suppose the case of a great officer of state, but of an abandoned character, residing at a great house in a populous street of the metropolis. His conspicuous station draws the eyes of all the neighbours on every part of his private as well as public conduct. His neighbours, we will proceed to suppose, are honest men, bred in what he calls the prejudices, but which they really believed the virtues, of their forefathers. They are faithful husbands, they are constant churchmen. They are temperate and œconomical. They are industrious in their occupations, and just in the payment of their debts. But the great man produces in them a total metamorphosis. He lives in a state of fashionable separation from his wife, whom he treated cruelly and wickedly. He keeps a mistress. His house is a constant scene of intemperate festivity. His Sundays are, in a peculiar manner, devoted to jollity, gaming, and debauchery. He would as soon think of going to heaven as to church; and as to paying debts, it is quite unfashionable, and he has genteeler methods of expending his money than on the low tradesmen who supply him with nothing else but necessaries. Who, that has any pretensions to fashion, could bear to neglect a horse-race and the gaming-table, merely to satisfy the greasy inhabitants of Clare-market? Such is sometimes the effect of example in a great neighbour, abounding with riches and covered with honours.

Now I ask, whether the restraints of a common education or of common principles, whether the maxims of books or the admonitions of preachers, can counterbalance the weight of such an example,

rendered brilliant by opulence and grandeur, and still farther recommended by the patronage of a government, and the authority of office? Vice and misery are communicated from him, first to his neighbourhood, and then to the public at large, like infectious and fatal diseases from the foul contagion of a putrid carcase.

But if a court, a ministry, a parliament, were to honour and reward those only, or chiefly, whose characters were unimpeached, and to brand with infamy, or at least to neglect, the abandoned libertine and the audacious blasphemer, however celebrated for eloquence and abilities, then would morals and religion flourish, then would the empire be fixed on a basis of adamant: then would faction and rebellion be no more; and the rulers of this world would deserve to be honoured with a title to which they have usually but little claim, that of the Representatives of the Beneficent and Almighty God.

NO. CXLV.—ON THE PROFLIGACY AND CONSEQUENT MISERY OF THE LOWER CLASSES, AND ON THE MEANS OF PREVENTION.

A CONTEMPLATIVE and benevolent man can scarcely look down for a moment on the lowest walks of life without feeling his compassion powerfully excited. On whatever side he turns, he beholds human nature sadly degraded, and sinking into the most deplorable ignorance, profligacy, and misery. Ye philosophers, who exert your ingenuity to explode the little morality and religion that remain among us, leave your closets a while, and survey mankind as they are found in the purlieus of a great metropolis, in the haunts of old Drury, of St. Giles's,

of Duke's Place, of Hockley in the Hole, of the brothel, of the prison-house; and then say, whether your hearts do not smite you on the recollection, that you have exercised those talents which God Almighty gave you for benignant purposes, in weakening the supports of honesty and all virtue! Let him who coolly controverts the distinction between moral good and evil, and who, instigated by vice and vanity, boldly fights against the religion of Jesus, and the comfortable doctrines of grace and redemption, repair to the cells of the convict, to the condemned hole, and spend the midnight hour with the murderer who is doomed to fall a victim on the morrow to the justice of his country. Ah! little think the conceited sophists, who sit calmly at their desks, and teach men to laugh at all that is serious and sacred, to what an abyss of misery the ACTUAL PRACTICE of their *speculative* opinions will reduce the poor lost child of fallen Adam! If they thought on this, and possessed hearts capable of feeling, they would shudder at the tendency of their writings, and henceforth employ their abilities in restoring human nature to happiness and dignity.

The evils arising from the poverty of the lower ranks are trifling, when compared with those occasioned by their depravity. There is, indeed, no real and substantial happiness, of which poverty, when accompanied with health and innocence, is not capable; but, wallowing in vice, involved in the perplexities of fraud, haunted by the fears of detection, and distressed and tormented with the disease of intemperance, it becomes such a state of wretchedness and wickedness as can only be exceeded in the regions of infernal torture. And can the rulers of this world possess a plenitude of power without attempting to exert it in its fullest force in the prevention, or at least the mitigation, of extreme misery among

the lowest, the most numerous, and perhaps the most useful members of the community? I have no esteem for that species of politics which pretends to pursue a national good independently of the happiness of individuals; and I cannot help thinking, a system of government, which derives any part of its wealth from the wretchedness of the greater part of its subjects, not only defective but diabolical. To encourage intoxication for the sake of increasing a revenue, though it may be natural in a confederacy of sharpers, is an idea so mean, so base, so cruel, that the statesman who entertains it, however loaded with civil honours, and renowned for his wisdom, deserves to be stigmatized with immortal infamy. That the vices and miseries of the lower classes chiefly arise from the multiplication of houses of public entertainment, is a truth which none have ever controverted. And perhaps no effectual and permanent remedy can be applied, without the interposition of the legislature, in lessening the number of public-houses, and in exacting a strict scrutiny into the characters of those to whom licences are allowed.

But, in the present constitution of affairs, it is greatly to be feared, that the desire of raising a large revenue will usually supersede all moral considerations. What, indeed, is the moralist to the financier? The greatness of empire, like that of private life, is for the most part estimated by riches, exclusively of private virtue and of intellectual excellence. If then we vainly appeal to the legislature, we must seek, in other resources, for the alleviation of a disease which perhaps the legislature alone can radically cure.

Now it is certain, that much of the profligacy of the plebeian order arises from extreme ignorance. All men pursue with ardour the possession of some

good, real or imaginary. What is it which must constitute this *good*, and appear superior to all other objects, in the mind of a wretch born in a cellar or a garret of Kent-street, or Broad St. Giles's, almost starved with cold and hunger during his infancy, beaten, reviled, abused, neglected while a boy, and conducted to manhood amidst the most shocking examples of cruelty and fraud, of drunkenness and debauchery? Is it probable that, for the most part, he should have an idea of any other good but the possession of money, and the indulgence of the grossest sensuality? Can he have any principles or habits of virtue to restrain him from secret fraud and open violence? His understanding is no less rude and uncultivated than that of the savage, and becomes at last incapable of admitting any instruction but in the low tricks of a thief, and the artifices of a prostitute. The world exists not to him, but as it appears amidst the vilest, the most degenerate, and the most ignorant of the human race. He pursues a *summum bonum*, or a chief good, which to him appears to consist in seizing the property of the incautious, and in using his gains as the instrument of brutal indulgence. Poor unfortunate brother! for a brother we must acknowledge thee, deformed as thou art with rags, and loathsome to the eye of delicacy—Hapless boy! if thou hadst known purer pleasures and better objects, thou wouldst probably have sought them with the same eagerness which has brought thee to the gibbet. The dignified statesman, the venerable bishop, the authoritative judge who tries and who condemns thee to die, might probably have done as thou hast done, and suffered as thou sufferest, had he been born as thou wast born, the child of misery, the outcast of society; friendless, homeless, unbeloved, unregarded, unknown, and unknowing of the means and motives

of an honest industry. Thou fallest a victim to the laws indeed, and perhaps a just victim; but I will pity thee, my heart shall bleed for thee, and venture still to predict, that the sweet mercy of Heaven, in consideration of thy sufferings and temptations on earth, will mitigate the severity of human justice.

He who can enjoy the pleasures of affluence without considering the misery of the lower classes, and endeavouring, according to his influence and abilities, to alleviate the burden, probably possesses a disposition which no riches can render happy. Charity is characteristic of this country, and is, indeed, the natural effect of British generosity. Our clergy are constantly recommending it in the metropolis; and the many palaces of the poor, which lift up their roofs around it, are eminent and honourable testimonies, that their preaching is not in vain when they recommend munificence. There are, however, few charitable establishments that so immediately tend to snatch the lowest classes from wretchedness and ruin, as that of the Marine Society; and if my praise could contribute to effect it, the fame of its institutors should be immortal. But their own benevolent hearts, and that God in whose gracious purposes they co-operate, are able to bestow on them a reward infinitely superior to all human glory.

They who inform the understandings of the poor, in such a manner and degree as to amend their morals, contribute more to their happiness than the most munificent among their pecuniary benefactors. In a great and commercial nation honest industry will seldom be destitute of employment and reward. And here I cannot help remarking the singular utility and importance of the clergy. The church-doors are open to all; and valuable instruction in every duty of human life is afforded gratuitously.

Our Saviour, who knew and felt for the wretchedness of the lower classes, seems to have designed the Gospel, in a peculiar manner, for the poor; and the poor of this country have the Gospel preached to them, if they are willing to listen to it, in every part of the kingdom. But it is a melancholy truth, that the poor in general, but especially those of the metropolis, neglect to avail themselves of this singular and unspeakable advantage. Those among them who give any attention to religion, are often led to a state approaching to lunacy, by illiterate and fanatical pretenders to heavenly illumination.

I venture to affirm, then, that more weight and authority should be given to the regular clergy, whether dissenters or on the establishment. I mean not to erect a spiritual tyranny, for I abhor all tyranny; but I wish that some mode should be devised for rendering the regular clergy more respectable than they now are in the eyes of the vulgar. And I should imagine the most effectual method of accomplishing this purpose is to reward those who are eminently distinguished in the great city for piety and for their parochial labours, with those preferments, and with those honours, which, in the eye of reason and of God, are justly their due.

But, after all that the clergy can effect, even when abuses are removed, it is to be feared that the lower classes will be led by the examples of the higher. But, ye who call yourselves the great, condescend once in your lives to visit a gaol, and to survey the mansions of woe and wickedness in the outskirts of the town! I apply not to your purses; ye are liberal in subscribing to all kinds of charitable institutions. Ye do well. But give me leave to tell you, that the setting of a good example to the lower classes, considered merely as an act of charity, will do more good and prevent more misery, than if ye cut down

your last oak, to found an hospital or establish a dispensary.

NO. CXLVI.—ON SOME PASSAGES IN ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC: WITH MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON HIS STYLE, GENIUS, AND WORKS.

Aristotle established an intellectual empire, more glorious and universal than the conquests of his pupil on this terrestrial globe. But he is a remarkable instance of the caprice of human judgement, and the revolutions of taste. After having been idolized with a veneration almost blasphemous, he is now most undeservedly neglected. And yet his works, though unentertaining and obscure to the reader who peruses them with the same attention which he gives to a novel and a newspaper, abound with matter which cannot fail to enrich the mind, and to delight a philosophical taste by its beautiful truth and accuracy. In his three books on the rhetorical art, are many passages, which describe human nature in the most curious manner, and with the greatest fidelity of delineation. He characterizes the peculiarities of different ages in the life of man, no less scientifically than a Hunter would describe an anatomical subject, or a Linnæus a plant. The fine pictures of the manners of young and old men in the second book, are such as Horace has imitated but not equalled; such as might have richly fertilized the imagination of a Shakespeare. The celebrated speech of Jaques, is not equal to the accurate and complete descriptions of the different characters which mark the progressive stages of human existence as portrayed by the neglected Aristotle.

The close, yet comprehensive language of Aristotle, will scarcely admit of a literal translation. I

shall not then attempt to deliver his sentiments in English, since I should not satisfy myself; but I will refer the young student to the admirable original, where, in the fourteenth, and a few subsequent chapters of the second book of Rhetoric, he will be able to acquire a very accurate knowledge of human nature.

I have pointed out these passages as a specimen of Aristotle, with an intention to obviate the prepossessions of those who imagine that every part of his works is abstruse and difficult of comprehension. A good translation would be the best commentary that could be given on them: but few men are equal to the task of translating Aristotle. We certainly have no translations of him in our language, but such as add to his obscurity, misrepresent him greatly, and bring his name into disgrace.

I cannot help remarking, that though this is an age in which many ingenious authors delight in metaphysical researches, yet few attend to the writings of Aristotle. Indeed many of the modern philosophers, who have done all they can to obscure the light of nature, common sense, and revelation, by the clouds of metaphysics, have not been sufficiently acquainted with Greek, or with ancient learning, to be able to improve themselves by the fine philosophy of the polished ages of Greece and Rome. Like spiders in a dark and dirty corner, they have drawn flimsy cobwebs from themselves, with which they cruelly endeavour to ensnare the giddy and unwary.

It is indeed my misfortune, if it be a misfortune, to have no great idea of the utility of metaphysical disquisition. And though Aristotle's logic and metaphysics principally contributed, in the middle ages, to render him the idol of the world, I cannot help considering them as the least useful parts of his vari-

ous lucubrations. They are indeed valuable curiosities, and illustrious monuments of human ingenuity; but at the same time, when compared to his rhetorical, ethical, and political books, they are as the husk and the shell to the pulp and the kernel. It was these, however, together with his erroneous physics, which induced the bigoted theologists to number Aristotle among the saints in the calendar, and to publish a history of his life and death; which concluded with asserting, that Aristotle was the forerunner of Christ in philosophy, as John the Baptist had been in grace. Images of him and of the Founder of Christianity were beheld at one time with equal veneration. It is said, that some sects taught their disciples the categories instead of the catechism, and read in the church a section of the ethics instead of a chapter in the Gospel.

If the exclamation which he is related to have made at his death be true, he appears to have possessed very rational ideas on the subject of religion.

A Christian might have said, as it is reported he said just before his dissolution, "In sin and shame was I born, in sorrow have I lived, in trouble I depart; O! thou Cause of causes, have mercy upon me!"—I found this anecdote of Aristotle in the Centuries of Camerarius, but I am not certain of its authenticity.

The style of Aristotle has been censured as harsh and inelegant; but it must be remembered, that few works, of which so much remains, are supposed to have suffered more from the carelessness or presumption of transcribers, and the injuries of long duration, than the works of the great legislator of taste and philosophy. We may fairly attribute any chasms and roughnesses in the style to some rude hand, or to accident. Strabo, indeed, relates, that the copies of Aristotle's works were greatly injured

by damps, as they were buried in the earth a long time after the death of their writer. When they were brought to Rome, and transcribed, they were again injured by the hand of ignorance. It is not credible that so accurate a writer should have neglected those graces of style which the nature of his subjects admitted. The style of his best works is truly pure and Attic; and Quintilian, whose judgement ought to decide, expresses a doubt whether he should pronounce him more illustrious for his knowledge, his copiousness, his acumen, his variety, or the sweetness of his style.

NO. CXLVII.—ON THE BEAUTY AND HAPPINESS OF AN OPEN BEHAVIOUR AND AN INGENUOUS DISPOSITION.*

MANY persons, if they cannot furnish themselves with the courage and generosity of the lion, think themselves equally happy, and much wiser, with the pitiful cunning of the fox. Every word they speak, however trivial the subject, is weighed before it is uttered. A disgustful silence is observed till somebody of authority has advanced an opinion, and then with a civil leer, a doubtful and hesitating assent is given, such as may not preclude the opportunity of a subsequent retractation. If the conversation turn only on the common topics of the weather, the news, the play, the opera, they are no less reserved than if their lives and fortunes depended on

* The intention of this, and several other papers, was to counteract the effects of Lord Chesterfield's Letters, which at the time these volumes were written, had almost engrossed the public attention, and were universally studied by the rising generation. I have reason to believe that they have had this salutary consequence.

the opinion they at last venture, with oracular dignity, to utter. Whatever may be their real idea on the subject, as truth is a trifle compared to the object of pleasing those with whom they converse, they generally contrive gently to agree with you; unless it should appear to them, on mature consideration, that their opinion (if contingencies to the number of at least ten thousand should take place) may, at the distance of half a century, involve them in some small danger of giving a little offence, or of incurring a small embarrassment. They wear a constant smile on their countenance, and are all goodness and benevolence, if you will believe their professions. But beware. A man of this character *niger est*, as Horace says, and thou who justly claimest the title of an honest Englishman, be upon thy guard when thine ill fortune introduces thee into his company.*

These crafty animals are even more reserved, cautious, timid, and serpentine, in action than in conversation. They lay the deepest schemes, and no conclave of cardinals, no combination of conspirators, no confederacy of thieves, ever deliberated with more impenetrable secrecy. Connexions are sought with the most painful solicitude. No arts and no assiduities are neglected to obtain the favour of the great. Their hearts pant with the utmost anxiety to be introduced to a family of distinction and opulence, not only because the connexion gratifies their pride, but also because, in the wonderful complications and vicissitudes of human affairs, it may one day promote their interest. Before that day arrives, their perpetual uneasiness has often put a period to their ambition, by terminating their existence. But even if they gain their ends,

* Hunc tu, Romane, caveto. HOR.

after a youth and a manhood consumed in constant care and servitude, yet the pleasure is not adequate to the pain, nor the advantage to the labour. Every one is ready to complain of the shortness of life; to spend, therefore, the greatest part of it in perpetual fear, caution, suspense, and solicitude, merely to accomplish an object of worldly ambition or avarice; what is it but the proverbial folly of him who loses a pound to save a penny? Give me, O ye powers! an ingenuous man would exclaim, give me health and liberty, with a competence, and I will compassionate the man of a timid and servile soul, who has at last crept on hands and knees, through thick and thin, and seated his trembling limbs, after they have been palsied with care, on some painful eminence.

Indeed, the perpetual agitation of spirits, the tormenting fears, and the ardent hopes, which alternately disorder the bosom of the subtle and suspicious worldling, are more than a counterbalance to all the riches and titular honours which successful cunning can obtain. What avail crosiers, coronets, fortunes, mansion-houses, parks, and equipages, when the poor pursuer of them has worn out his sensibility, ruined his nerves, lost his eyes, and perhaps stained his honour, and wounded his conscience, in toilsome drudgery and abject servitude, from his youth up even to the age of feebleness and decrepitude? When a man has a numerous offspring, it may, indeed, be generous to sacrifice his own ease and happiness to their advancement. He may feel a virtuous pleasure in his conduct, which may sooth him under every circumstance of disagreeable toil or painful submission. But it is obvious to observe, that the most artful of men, and the greatest slaves to interest and ambition, are frequently unmarried men; and that they were unmarried, because their

caution and timidity would never permit them to take a step which could never be revoked. Themselves, however unamiable, have been the only objects of their love; and the rest of mankind have been made use of merely as the instruments of their mean purposes and selfish gratifications. But the rest of mankind need not envy them, for they inflict on themselves the punishments they deserve. They are always craving and never satisfied; they suffer a torment which is justly represented by the heathen mythologists as infernal, that of being perpetually reaching after blessings which they can never grasp, of being prohibited to taste the fruit whose colour appears so charming to the eye, and whose flavour so delicious to the imagination.

How lovely and how happy, on the other hand, an open and ingenuous behaviour! An honest, unsuspicious heart diffuses a serenity over life, like that of a fine day, when no cloud conceals the blue æther, nor a blast ruffles the stillness of the air;—but a crafty and designing bosom is all tumult and darkness, and may be said to resemble a misty and disordered atmosphere in the comfortless climate of the poor Highlander. The one raises a man almost to the rank of an angel of light; the other sinks him to a level with the powers of darkness. The one constitutes a terrestrial heaven in the breast, the other deforms and debases it till it becomes another Tartarus.

An open and ingenuous disposition is not only beautiful and greatly conducive to private happiness, but productive of many virtues essential to the welfare of society. What is society without confidence? But if the selfish and mean system which is established and recommended among many whose advice and example have weight, should universally prevail, in whom, and in what shall we

be able to confide?—It is already shocking to a liberal mind to observe what a multitude of papers, parchments, oaths, and solemn engagements, is required, even in a trivial negociation. On the contrary, how comfortable and how honourable to human nature, if promises were bonds, and assertions affidavits. What pleasure and what improvement would be derived from conversation, if every one would dare to speak his real sentiments, with modesty and decorum, indeed, but without any unmanly fear of offending? To please by honest means, and from the pure motives of friendship and philanthropy, is a duty; but they who study the art of pleasing merely for their own sakes, are, of all characters, those which ought least to please, and which appear, when the masque is removed, the most disgustful. Truth and simplicity of manners are not only essential to virtue and happiness, but, as objects of taste, truly beautiful. Good minds will always be pleased with them, and bad minds we need not wish to please.

Since cunning and deceit are thus odious in themselves, and incompatible with real happiness and dignity, I cannot help thinking, that those instructors of the rising generation, who have insisted on simulation and dissimulation, on the *pensieri stretti*, on the thousand tricks of worldly wisdom, are no less mistaken in their ideas, than mean, contracted, and illiberal. Listen not, ye generous young men, whose hearts are yet untainted, listen not to the delusive advice of men so deluded or so base. Have courage enough to avow the sentiments of your souls, and let your countenance and your tongue be the heralds of your hearts. Please, consistently with truth and honour; or be contented not to please. Let justice and benevolence fill your bosom, and they will shine spontaneously, like the real gem, without the aid

of a foil, and with the most durable and captivating brilliancy.

NO. CXLVIII.—A REMEDY FOR DISCONTENT.

COMPLAINTS and murmurs are often loudest and most frequent among those who possess all the external means of temporal enjoyment. Something is still wanting, however high and opulent their condition, fully to complete their satisfaction. Suppose an indulgent Providence to accomplish every desire; are they now at last contented? Alas! no; their uneasiness seems for ever to increase, in proportion as their real necessities are diminished. It is in vain then to endeavour to make them happy by adding to their store, or aggrandizing their honours. Their appetite is no less insatiable than their taste fastidious.

But there yet may remain a remedy. Let those who are miserable among riches and grandeur, leave, for a moment, their elevated rank, and descend from their palaces to the humble habitations of real and unaffected woe. If their hearts are not destitute of feeling, they will return from the sad scenes to their closets, and on their knees pour forth the ejaculations of gratitude to that universal Parent who has given them abundance, and exempted them from the thousand ills, under the pressure of which the greater part of his children drag the load of life. Instead of spending their hours in brooding over their own imaginary evils, they will devote them to the alleviation of real misery among the destitute sons of indigence, in the neglected walks of vulgar life.

That one half of the world knows not how the other half lives, is a common and just observation.

A fine lady, surrounded with every means of accommodation and luxury, complains in a moment of *ennui*, that surely no mortal is so wretched as herself. Her sufferings are too great for her acute sensibility. She expects pity from all her acquaintance, and pleases herself with the fantastic idea that she is an example of singular misfortune, and remarkable patience. Physicians attend, and with affected solicitude feel the healthy pulse, which, however, they dare not pronounce healthy, lest they should give offence by attempting to spoil the refined luxury of fancied woe. To be supposed always ill, and consequently to be always exciting the tender attention and inquiries of all around, is a state so interesting, so charming in the ideas of the weak, luxurious, and indolent minds, that many spend their lives in a perpetual state of imaginary convalescence. There is something so indelicate in being hale, hearty, and stout, like a rosy milk-maid, that a very fine and very high-bred lady is almost ready to faint at the idea. From excessive indulgence, she becomes at last in reality what she at first only fancied herself, a perpetual invalid. By a just retribution she is really punished with that wretchedness, of which she ungratefully and unreasonably complained in the midst of health, ease, and opulence.

One might ask all the sisterhood and fraternity of rich and healthy murmurers, Have you compared your situation and circumstances with that of those of your fellow-creatures who are condemned to perpetual labour for a morsel of bread? Have you compared your situation with that of those who have hardly ever seen the sun, but live confined in tin mines, lead mines, and coal pits? Before you call yourself wretched, take a survey of the gaols, in which unfortunate and honest debtors are doomed to pine; walk through the wards of an hospital;

think of the hardships of a common soldier or sailor; think of the galley-slave; nay, think of your poor neighbour at the next cottage; and, if there were not danger of its being called unpolite and methodistical, I would add, think of Him who, for your sake, sweated, as it were, drops of blood on Calvary.

It is, indeed, a duty to consider the evils of those who are placed beneath us; for the chief purpose of Christianity is, to alleviate the miseries of that part of mankind whom the world despises; but whom He who made them, pities, like as a father pitieth his own children. Their miseries are not fanciful, their complaints are not exaggerated. The clergy, when they are called upon to visit the sick, or to baptize new-born infants, are often spectators of such scenes as would cure the discontented of every malady. The following representation is but too real, and may be paralleled in many of its circumstances in almost every parish throughout the kingdom.

The minister of a country village was called upon to baptize an infant just born. The cottage was situated on a lonely common; and, as it was in the midst of winter, and the floods were out, it was absolutely necessary to wade in water through the lower room, to a ladder, which served instead of stairs. The chamber (and it was the only one) was so low, that you could not stand upright in it; there was one window, which admitted air as freely as light, for the rags which had been stuffed into the broken panes were now taken out to contribute to the covering of the infant. In a dark corner of the room stood a small bedstead without furniture, and on it lay the dead mother, who had just expired in labour for want of assistance. The father was sitting on a little stool by the fire-place, though there was no

fire, and endeavouring to keep the infant warm in his bosom. Five of the seven children, half naked, were asking their father for a piece of bread, while a fine boy, of about three years old, was standing by his mother at the bed-side, and crying, as he was wont to do, "Take me, take me, mammy."—"Mammy is asleep," said one of his sisters, with tears standing on her cheeks which she tried to conceal; "mammy is asleep, Johnny; go play with the baby on daddy's knee." The father took him up on his knee, and his grief, which had hitherto kept him dumb, and in a state of temporary insensibility, burst out in a torrent of tears, and relieved his heart, which seemed ready to break. "Don't cry, pray don't cry," said the eldest boy, "the nurse is coming up stairs with a two-penny loaf in her hand, and mammy will wake presently, and I will carry her the largest piece." Upon this, an old woman, crooked with age, and clothed in tatters, came hobbling on her little stick into the room, and, after heaving a groan, calmly sat down, dressed the child in its rags, then divided the loaf as far as it would go, and informed the poor man that the churchwardens, to whom she had gone, would send some relief as soon as they had dispatched a naughty baggage to her own parish, who had delivered herself of twins in the Esquire's hovel. Relief indeed was sent, and a little contribution afterwards raised by the interposition of the minister. If he had not seen the case, it would have passed on as a common affair, and a thing of course.

Ministers and medical practitioners are often witnesses to scenes even more wretched than this; where, to poverty, cold, nakedness, and death, are added the languors of lingering and loathsome diseases, and the torments of excruciating pain. A feeling heart, among the rich and the great, who are

at the same time querulous without cause, would learn a lesson in many a garret of Broad St. Giles's or Shoreditch, more efficacious than all the lectures of the moral or divine philosopher.

I cannot help mentioning and applauding a mode of charity of late much encouraged in this metropolis, which is indeed distinguished above all others for the wisdom and variety of its eleemosynary institutions. Dispensaries are established for the poor, and patients visited at their own habitations by physicians of allowed skill and distinguished character. Such institutions owe their origin and support to HIM "WHO WENT ABOUT HEALING ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND ALL MANNER OF DISEASE AMONG THE PEOPLE."

NO. CXLIX.—ON THE UTILITY OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, AND OF ADMITTING MUSIC AND EXTERNAL MAGNIFICENCE IN PLACES OF DEVOTION.

IF all men were enlightened by education and philosophy, and at all hours actuated by the principles of reason, it would be unnecessary to have recourse to external objects in producing devout and virtuous affections. But as there must always be a great majority, who, from the want of opportunities or capacities for improvement, are weak and ignorant; and as even among the wise and learned there are none who are constantly exempted from the common infirmities of human nature, it becomes expedient to devise modes of operating on the soul through the medium of the senses. It was for this reason, that in all great communities the officers and offices of religion have been surrounded with whatever is calculated to rouse the attention, to interest

the heart, to strike the eye, and to elevate the imagination.

I cannot help thinking, therefore, that those well-meaning reformers, who wish to divest religion of external splendour, are unacquainted with the nature of man, or influenced by narrow motives. They mean, perhaps, to spiritualize every thing, and the purpose is laudable; but they know not, or they consider not, that ordinary spirits, such as are those of the vicious and vulgar, are most easily and effectually touched by the instrumentality of exterior and material objects. He who wishes to penetrate to the recesses of the vulgar mind, will succeed better by the co-operation of the eyes and the ears, than merely by addressing the rational faculty.

An idea may be formed of the potency of sounds and sights, unassisted by reason, if we contemplate their effect in war. The drum, the fife, the habiliments of a soldier, the flag, and all the pomp and parade of military transactions, contribute, perhaps more than any sense of duty, or any native or acquired sentiments of bravery, to lead on the embattled phalanx even to the cannon's mouth. It is something operating in the mind in a similar manner, which most easily bows the stubborn knee of the hardened offender, and subdues to softness the steely heart, on which no force of argument could of itself stamp an impression. There are few who cannot hear or see, but many who cannot understand. All can feel a powerful stroke on the fancy or passions, but few, in comparison, are affected by the most perfect syllogism.

Music, therefore, poetry, painting, and architecture, may very reasonably be associated as auxiliaries of Reason, an empress, whose subjects are rebellious. And I cannot help thinking, that they who repudiate all ornament, and all the modes of

affecting the senses of the vulgar in the offices of religion, as indecent, impious, or improper, do not recollect the temple of Solomon, but suffer their good sense to be overpowered in this instance by the zeal of a barbarous fanaticism.

The offices of religion where music and artificial embellishments are admitted, become so alluring, that those who would never think of their more serious duties, are often invited by them to the church, and gradually converted. Like the rake of antiquity, who mingled in the audience of a philosopher with a design to ridicule him, but who was made a convert before his departure, many of the loose and profligate votaries of vice have been enticed by the music and afterwards reformed by the sermon, which they intended to slight, and perhaps had begun to deride.

The processions and pompous formalities of religion, however exploded in the warmth of reformation as papistical relics, are certainly useful in the community, when they are not suffered to exceed the bounds of moderation. They were esteemed and observed in ancient Athens and ancient Rome, by those who loved and enjoyed liberty in its fullest extent. They were found to aggrandize the majesty of empire, to inspire a generous enthusiasm into the minds of the people, and to furnish them with an amusement, not only innocent and improving, but attended with a very high and satisfactory pleasure. None can detest popery more than myself; but yet it appears to me, that many of the splendid and august scenes which that persuasion admits, are highly useful, if considered only as furnishing a harmless entertainment to the lower orders of mankind. What charms can a London carman, chairman, hackney-coachman, fish-woman, and all the numerous tribes of the lowest class, find

in an English meeting or a church? but they would be delighted, and very powerfully affected, with the grandeur and solemnity of a Romish procession. As we have no allurements adapted to their ignorant and rude minds, they spend the Sunday at an alehouse, even at the next door to the church, without a wish to enter the consecrated place. All that passes there is above their comprehension. They are but little removed from the state of the brutes, and they must remain so; for there is nothing, in the only places in which they have an opportunity of instruction, to strike their imaginations, and penetrate, through the passage of the senses, to the shrine of the dormant soul.

It is true, indeed, that we admit music in the established church; but it is also true, that it is in general a kind of music which is little better than discord to the vulgar ear. For in the metropolis, where chiefly organs are to be found, the performers are too fond of showing their powers of execution, and seldom play those simple tunes which alone can affect the minds of the simple and uninformed.

There has been much conversation on the subject of adorning St. Paul's cathedral with the productions of the pencil. Many artists, it is said, have offered to contribute the efforts of their ingenuity. Some scruples have arisen to impede the design. In this age they cannot be puritanical. I really think that the admission of paintings in the church, under due regulations, would produce a desirable effect on the morals of the lower classes. But if painting is not to be admitted, there surely can be no objection to sculpture. Westminster-abbey is crowded with monuments; and I will venture to predict that our posterity will see St. Paul's equally honoured. I hope the event will not take place so late as to ex-

clude such artists as Bacon, or, if painting is admitted, such as Reynolds* and West.

With an union of architecture, poetry, music, and painting, we may exclaim with Bruyère: "Que de magnificence et de dignité dans le culte divin! que d'élévation dans les Pseaumes! que de majesté dans les chants! que de pompe dans les solemnités! tout édifie et tout annonce la présence du Saint des Saints."

NO. CL.—ON THE PRESENT STATE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELOQUENCE.

In taking a view of parliamentary eloquence, I mean to consider it as totally independent of party and politics, and solely as a subject of literary taste. It must be a peculiar narrowness of spirit which bestows or refuses applause to the productions of genius, because they are found to favour either a court or an opposition. I would allow an equal share of praise to equal genius, whether it appeared in a leader of the minority, or in the first minister of state.

The speeches from the throne are little more than the formalities of office. It would be unreasonable to expect in them the fire, the pathos, the argument of genuine and animated oratory. But they usually possess an air of dignity highly proper and charac-

* Since this was written, death has snatched the pencil from the hand of Reynolds, and many monuments have been erected in St. Paul's. It is to be regretted that the names of some of the persons to whose honour they are erected, are scarcely recorded any where else. The honour should be reserved, with the strictest impartiality, for those who are *illustriously* good and great.

teristical. They breathe a spirit of sincerity and paternal tenderness, which at once marks the judgement of the composer, and endears the speaker to his people. There was one on the commencement of the war with America, which deserves to be selected as a very spirited and memorable harangue. It would have adorned the page of a Livy. "The resolutions of parliament," said his Majesty, "breathed a spirit of moderation and forbearance.—I have acted with the same temper; anxious to prevent, if it had been possible, the effusion of the blood of my subjects, and the calamities which are inseparable from a state of war; still hoping, that my people in America would have discerned the traitorous views of their leaders, and have been convinced, that to be a subject to Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the freest member of any civil society in the known world.

"The rebellious war now levied is become more general, and is manifestly carried on for the purpose of establishing an independent empire. I need not dwell on the fatal effects of the success of such a plan. The object is too important, the spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great tenderness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expense of blood and treasure.—The constant employment of my thoughts, and the most earnest wishes of my heart, tend wholly to the safety and happiness of all my people."—The spirit of a great king, and the tender solicitude which speaks the true father of his people, render this speech truly excellent, and, indeed, its excellence was evinced by its effects; for soon after it was disseminated over the nation, the

American war, which was once universally odious, became rather popular. Yet, though the instability of human affairs every day strikes the mind of a contemplative man, little did the composer of the above passage conceive, that in a few years the *high spirit of the British nation* would be reduced to the humiliating necessity of almost supplicating for peace the *deluded* people of America.

In an assembly like the higher house, consisting of men, in whose education no expense has been spared, who are, or who ought to be, animated by their own exalted situation and the examples of an illustrious ancestry, one might reasonably expect to find frequent examples of distinguished eloquence. But it really would be difficult to name a single peer who has attracted notice or admiration for the CLASSICAL elegance of his matter or language. The law lords, relying on their professional knowledge, do, indeed, frequently make long and bold speeches; but not often such as please an Attic or a Roman taste, or deserve the praise of pure and legitimate oratory. Of all the speeches spoken in the house, how few have ever been collected and preserved in libraries, as models of classical elegance! Passion and personal animosity have, indeed, produced many invectives, which gratify the spleen of party, and are for the time extolled beyond all the productions of preceding ingenuity. But is there extant a single volume of speeches, by the most famous among the orators of the upper house, which can be produced as a classical book, or stand in competition with the orations of Cicero? I think it necessary to repeat, that my remarks have not the least reference to party. I am in search of an orator, to whom the epithet of classical may be justly applied. I regret that the fury of party on one side, and the meanness of servility on the other, have for the most part

excluded, that true taste, true grace, and true spirit, which is necessary to form a classical orator, from the harangues of an assembly justly deemed the most august in Europe. I must, in justice, say, that the best speech I ever heard in the upper house was from Lord Grenville; and I hope that from him at last will be collected the grand desideratum, a classical volume of deliberative eloquence. He is, indeed, capable of furnishing models which the rising generation may study as classical lessons.

The House of Commons has always been esteemed a very distinguished theatre of modern eloquence. And there indeed, notwithstanding the same impediments which prevail among the peers, it is easy to produce many splendid examples. In the House of Commons, men have been stimulated by the most powerful motives, by the hopes of rising; in the House of Lords they have already risen. But though we join in the applause of common fame, yet let us ask, where are to be found the volumes of oratorical elegance? Have the speeches which have gained the praise of admiring kingdoms, been no where collected and recorded? Do we lock them up in our book-cases, and put them into the hands of our children as models for imitation, as lessons to form their young minds, and raise a succession of orators and patriots? No; the speeches are celebrated at first, and while they answer a temporary purpose. They are like vegetables of a night, or insects of a day. They have seldom that solidity of merit which can render the ore valuable when the stamp is effaced, and the occasion of it almost forgotten and quite disregarded; which can preserve the plate till saleable after the fashion is antiquated. Glorious was the eloquence of *Chatham* while a commoner. Nations shook at the thunder of his voice. But where are the harangues? are they preserved

as illustrious models for the instruction of posterity? Instead of being engraven on brass, they are almost sunk into an oblivion, like the soldiers whose bones once whitened the plains of Germany. Yet I mean not to detract from his glories. Language can scarcely supply terms to express the weight of his authority, the magnitude of his mind and his character, and the efficacy with which he thought, decided, spoke, and acted. But let it not escape the reader's attention, that we are inquiring for a rival to the masterly and transcendent excellence of a Cicero and a Demosthenes. If such has of late appeared among us, the curiosity of this age would have preserved it; and if it be preserved, let the volume be openly produced, and the public will embrace it as an invaluable treasure.

The applause indeed bestowed on one orator, is scarcely adequate to his literary merit. Mr. Burke has produced to the world very honourable testimonies of his natural abilities and his acquired taste. What orations are there published of modern members, which can bear a comparison with those of Mr. Burke? With what dignity he addressed the people of Bristol; and how mean and little did they appear, contrasted with him whom they rejected! Like Socrates before the judges, he appeared more like their master than their suppliant. He concludes with a spirit worthy of him who wrote on the sublime and beautiful; worthy of a polished ancient in the best of ages—" And now, gentlemen," says he, " on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you; let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges brought against me. I do not here stand accused of venality, or neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the

slightest of your interests to my ambition or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any one man in any description.—No; the charges against me are all of one kind, that I have pushed the general principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression and distress, I will think of this accusation, and be comforted."

There are not indeed many of the members who favour the public with their harangues, so that we have not an opportunity of judging of all so well as of Mr. Burke's. Who but must regret that a Fox did not himself polish and publish those orations, which, while they charmed all who heard them, tended to the salvation of his country, and the happiness of the human race. The opportunity is now lost. The friend of man, whose benevolent heart and eloquent tongue were enabled to plead with success the cause of liberty and humanity in a corrupt and venal age, is consigned to the silent grave. Had HE HIMSELF printed his orations, the world would have been illuminated by his wisdom, and philanthropy would have triumphed in Europe, as well as in Asia, Africa, and America. We must, however, acknowledge our great obligations to the ingenious persons who take the debates with greater ability, and whose memories seem equal to the instances of which we read, but which do not often occur in our intercourse with society. They often give the matter of a speech, but they cannot give the soul of eloquence.

NO. CLI.—A LIFE OF LETTERS USUALLY A LIFE OF COMPARATIVE INNOCENCE.

It is not the least among the happy effects of a studious life, that it withdraws the student from the turbulent scenes and pursuits, in which it is scarcely less difficult to preserve innocence than tranquillity. Successful study requires so much attention, and engrosses so much of the heart, that he who is deeply engaged in it, though he may indeed be liable to temporary lapses, will seldom contract an inveterate habit of immorality. There is in all books of character a reverence for virtue, and a tendency to inspire a laudable emulation. He who is early, long, and successfully conversant with them, will find his bosom filled with the love of truth, and affected with a delicate sense of honour. By constantly exercising his reason, his passions are gradually reduced to subjection, and his head and heart keep pace with each other in improvement. But when I assert that such are the consequences of literary pursuits, it is necessary to distinguish between the real and pretended student; for there are many desultory readers, and volatile men of parts, who affect eccentricity, whose lives, if one may so express it, are uniformly irregular, and who consequently exhibit remarkable instances of misery and misfortune.

Folly and imprudence will produce moral and natural evil, their genuine offspring, in all situations and modes of life. The knowledge of arts and sciences cannot prevent the vices and the woes which must arise from the want of knowing how to regulate our private and social conduct. But where prudence and virtue are not deficient, I believe few

walks of life are pleasanter and safer than those which lead through the regions of literature.

Many among mankind are involved in perpetual tumult, so that when they feel an inclination to consider their duty, their nature, their truest happiness, they can scarcely find an opportunity. But he, whom Providence has blessed with an enlightened mind, and the command of his own time, is enabled to form his heart, and direct his choice, according to the dictates of the most improved intellects, and the examples of the most accomplished characters. He is, indeed, a creature far superior to the common herd of men, and, being acquainted with pure and exalted pleasures, lies not under the necessity of seeking delight in the grosser gratifications. He considers not property as the chief good; he is therefore free from temptations to violate his integrity. Disappointment in matters of interest will never render him uneasy or discontented, for his books have discovered to him a treasure more valuable, in his estimation, than the riches of Peru. Through all the vicissitudes of life, he has a source of consolation in the retirement of his library, and in the principles and reflections of his own bosom. From his reading he will collect a just estimate of the world and of all around him; and, as he will cherish no unreasonable expectations, he will be exempted from severe disappointment.

The conversation of many abounds with slander and detraction, not originally and entirely derived from a malignity of nature, but also from ignorance, from a vacancy of intellect, and from an inability to expatiate on general and generous topics. But, whatever be the motive of them, it is certain that few crimes are more injurious to private happiness, and opposite to the spirit of our amiable religion, than slander and detraction. The man of reading

is under no temptation to calumniate his neighbour from the defect of ideas, or a want of taste for liberal and refined conversation. He interests himself in his neighbour's happiness; but does not pry into the affairs, nor sit in judgement on the domestic arrangements, of another's family. Most of the topics of scandal are too little and too low for him. He will not stoop from his elevation low enough to pick the dirty trifles from the ground. His thoughts are engaged in elegant and refined subjects, far removed from all which tend to excite envy, jealousy, or malevolence.

The want of employment is one of the frequent causes of vice; but he who loves a book will never want employment. The pursuits of learning are boundless, and they present to the mind a delightful variety which cannot be exhausted. No life is long enough to see all the beautiful pictures which the arts and sciences, or which history, poetry, and eloquence, are able to display. The man of letters possesses the power of calling up a succession of scenes to his view infinitely numerous and diversified. He is therefore secured from that unhappy state, which urges many to vice and dissipation, merely to fill a painful vacuity. Even though his pursuits should be trifling, and his discoveries unimportant, yet they are harmless to others, and useful to himself, as preservatives of his innocence. Let him not be ridiculed or condemned, even though he should spend his time in collecting and describing moths, mosses, shells, birds, weeds, or coins; for he who loves these things seldom sets his affections on pelf, or any of those objects which corrupt and divide human society. He who finds his pleasure in a museum or a library, will not be often seen in the tavern, in the brothel, or at the gaming-table. He is pleased if he possesses a non-descript fossil,

and envies not the wretched enjoyments of the intemperate, nor the ill-gotten wealth of the oppressor or extortioner.

But his pursuits have usually a title to much greater praise than that of being inoffensive. Suppose him in any of the liberal professions. If a clergyman, for instance, he devotes his time and abilities to the preparation of dissuasives from vice, from folly, from misconduct, from infidelity, from all that contributes to aggravate the wretchedness of wretched human nature. Here the pleasures naturally resulting from literary occupations are improved by the sublime sensations of active benevolence, the comfortable consciousness of advancing the truest happiness of those among our poor fellow-creatures who have not enjoyed the advantages of education. In the performance of the godlike office of a true parish priest, there is a necessity of setting an example, and of preserving decorum of character; a necessity which conduces much to the security of innocence and good conduct. It is often a great happiness to be placed in a rank, where, to the restraints of conscience and morality, are added the fear of peculiar shame, loss, and disgrace, necessarily consequent on ill behaviour. Human nature wants every support to keep it from lapsing into depravity. Even interest and a solicitude for reputation, when, in some thoughtless interval, the pillars of virtue begin to totter, may stop the fall. The possession of a valuable character, which may be lost, and of a dignity which must be supported, are often very useful auxiliaries in defending the citadel against the temporary assaults of passion and temptation.

Since, then, the pursuit of letters is attended with many circumstances peculiarly favourable to innocence, and consequently to enjoyment of the purest

and most permanent species, they who have been fixed in so desirable a life as a life of learning, ought to be grateful to Providence for their fortunate lot, and endeavour to make the best return in their power, by devoting their leisure, their abilities, and their acquirements, to performing the will of God, and promoting the benefit of mankind.

NO. CLII.—ON THE ADVANTAGE WHICH MAY BE DERIVED TO THE TENDER AND PATHETIC STYLE FROM USING THE WORDS AND PHRASES OF SCRIPTURE.

It is observable that an audience often laughs or yawns in the most interesting scenes of a modern tragedy; a lamentable proof of the poet's imbecility. The poet! he may, indeed, be a versifier and a declaimer, but he is no poet, who tells a tragic tale without eliciting a tear. Let us not profane the sacred name of poet by bestowing it on the feeble poetaster.

It is not enough that the language of a tragedy is flowery, the similes and metaphors brilliant, the verse melodious; there must be a charm added by the creative power of almighty genius, which no didactic rules can teach, which cannot be adequately described, but which is powerfully felt by the vibrations of the heart-strings, and which causes an irresistible overflowing of the Δακρυων πηγαι, the *sacri fontes lachrymarum.**

Florid diction and pompous declamation are, indeed, found to be the least adapted of all modes of address to affect the finer sensibilities of nature.

* The sacred source of tears.

Plain words, without epithets, without metaphors, without similes, have oftener excited emotions of the tenderest sympathy, than the most laboured composition of Corneille. Ye who would learn to touch the heart, go not to the schools of France, but become the disciples of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Sterne, and Chatterton. Thou captivating simplicity! 'tis thine at once to effect what all the artifices of rhetoric, with all its tropes and figures, tediously and vainly labour to accomplish. 'Tis thine to dissolve the hardest heart, and to force even nerves of steel to tremble. A few words of simple pathos will penetrate the soul to the quick, when a hundred lines of declamation shall assail it as feebly and ineffectually, as a gentle gale the rock of Gibraltar.

A writer of taste and genius may avail himself greatly in pathetic compositions, by adopting the many words and phrases, remarkable for their beautiful simplicity, which are interspersed in that pleasing, as well as venerable book, the Holy Bible. I cannot, indeed, entirely agree with those zealous critics who pretend to discover in the Scriptures all the graces of all the best classics. To please the ear and imagination, were very inferior objects in the benevolent mind of Him who caused all holy Scripture to be written for our use. But, at the same time, it is certain, they abound in such beauties as never fail to please the most cultivated taste. Besides their astonishing sublimity, they have many passages exquisitely tender and pathetic. Our admirable translation has preserved many of them in all their beauty; and an English writer may select from it a diction better suited to raise the sympathy of grief, than from the most celebrated models of human composition.

Sterne, who, though he is justly condemned for

his libertinism, possessed an uncommon talent for the pathetic, has availed himself greatly of the Scriptural language. In all his most affecting passages, he has imitated the turn, style, manner, and simplicity, of the sacred writers, and in many of them has transcribed whole sentences. He found no language of his own could equal the finely expressive diction of our common translation. There are a hundred instances of his imitating Scripture interspersed in all the better parts of his works, and no reader of common observation can pass by them unnoticed. I will quote only one or two instances, taken from the most admired pieces in the tender style. "Maria, though not tall, was nevertheless of the first order of fine forms. Affliction had touched her looks with something that was scarce earthly, and so much was there about her of all that the heart wishes, or the eyes look for in woman, that could the traces be ever worn out of her brain, or those of Eliza out of mine, she should not only eat of my bread, and drink of my cup, but Maria should lie in my bosom, and be unto me as a daughter.

"Adieu, poor luckless maiden! imbibe the oil and wine which the compassion of a stranger, as he sojourneth on his way, now pours into thy wounds. The Being who has twice bruised thee can only bind them up for ever." Again, in his description of a captive. "As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye toward the door, then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh. I saw the iron enter into his soul." It is easy, but it is not necessary, to adduce many more instances in which a writer, who eminently excelled in the power of

moving the affections, felt himself unequal to the task of advancing the style of pathos to its highest perfection, and sought assistance of the Bible.

It is easy to see that the writer of so many tender and simple passages had imitated the delightful book of Ruth. With what pleasure did a man of his feeling read, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Sterne stole the very spirit of this passage, and indeed of all the fine strokes of tenderness, and many a one there is, in a book which is often laid aside by polite scholars as absurd and obsolete. The choice which Sterne has made of texts and of citations from the Scriptures in his sermons, are proofs that he (who was one of the best judges of the pathetic) was particularly struck with the affecting tenderness and lovely simplicity of Scriptural language.

The poet, therefore, who means to produce a tragedy, which shall be able to stand its ground even after the first nine nights, without the aid of puffing, and without filling the pit and boxes with orders, should sometimes go to the same fountain, and drink the waters of poetical inspiration of which Sterne drank so copiously. He will improve greatly by studying the language and histories of Joseph, Saul, and Jonathan, of Ruth, of Job, of the Psalms, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of many single passages every where interspersed, and of the parables in the New Testament. Judgement and taste are certainly necessary to select; but he may depend upon it, that a word or two well selected will gain him the truest applause, that which is conveyed in sighs and tears. Let him fully persuade himself, that the

only method of operating powerfully on the feelings of nature, is to renounce art and affectation, and to adhere to truth and simplicity.

Something is necessary to be done to produce an alteration. The theatrical state is in its decline. It cannot much longer be supported by fine dresses, painted scenes, music, dancing, and pantomime. We have hearts, as well as ears and eyes; if they know not how to touch our passions at Old Drury, let us hasten to the Opera-house, and see the man stand upon one leg.

NO. CLIII.—ON READING MERELY WITH A VIEW TO AMUSEMENT.

There are many who spend much of their time in reading, but who read as they play at cards, with no other intention but to pass their time without labouring under the intolerable burden of a total inactivity. The more trifling the book, the better they suppose it suited to their purpose. Plays, pamphlets, memoirs, novels, and whatever entertains them without requiring any great degree of attention, constitute the whole of their library. Even these are read in a desultory manner, without the interference of taste, or the trouble of selection. Indeed this light food for the mind is so much wanted, that the circulating libraries lay in a stock of it every year; and an assortment of summer-reading is in as great request at the booksellers' in the watering-places, as a variety of new spring-patterns at the silk-mercers' in Pall-Mall. The fine lady and gentleman, who have nothing to do but to pursue their amusement, and in whose delicate minds the dressing of the hair is a business of

the first importance, commonly spend two or three hours every day under the hands of the friseur; but then the time is by no means wasted; for it is spent in summer-reading: and as the volumes which contain summer-reading are not large folios, and neither printed on the smallest type, nor on the most crowded page, one of them just serves to fill up the morning hours devoted to the artist of the comb. The gentle student rises from his chair when the operation is completed, takes off his flannel gown, sends back the half-bound book to the library, and enters upon the momentous business of *making calls*, without any odious gravity or seriousness, which might perhaps have remained with him had his morning studies required deep thought, or communicated to him a series of sober reflections. He can, indeed, in a rainy day, devour half a dozen volumes of summer-reading, and be no more incommoded than when he swallows as many puffs and syllabubs at the confectioner's.

It must be allowed that this kind of reading, trifling as it is, may often constitute an amusing and a very innocent pastime. But I will venture to say, that useful and improving reading might be found, that should be equally and indeed more entertaining. The same time spent on books of character, which is lavished away on literary trash, would render many a mind, which is now vain and superficial, really elegant, prudent, and well-informed. The time spent under the operation of the friseur is very properly spent in reading; but why should not the works of the English classics be used in preference to a vile translation from a foolish French novel? To a taste not vitiated, the works of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Addison, and many other of their successful followers, are much more pleasing than the hasty productions of hireling writers, whose

indigence compels them to be less solicitous about quality than quantity; who study not so much what is congruous to taste and truth, as what will catch the notice of the general reader, and answer the venal purpose of their employer by a rapid sale. Have we not many true histories, elegant in their style, abounding with matter most improving to the heart and understanding, and calculated to interest and entertain, in a very high degree, by gratifying curiosity? Unless we renounce our pretensions to reason, we must confess that such books are capable of furnishing more pleasure, exclusively of the improvement, than anonymous and unauthenticated anecdotes, memoirs, novels, voyages, travels, lives, and adventures.

There are those who have read more volumes than the profoundest scholars in the nation, who are yet unacquainted with the elements of science, with the most interesting facts of true history, with the maxims of philosophy, with the beauties of style, and with the extent and force of the language. They have read inattentively what indeed was scarcely worth attention; and they have immediately forgotten what was too futile to deserve remembrance. Had they possessed judgement sufficient to point out the proper books, and resolution to pursue the dictates of their judgement, they would have enriched their minds with inestimable treasures, and acquired the reputation and satisfaction of solid scholars. The same exertions of their eyes, the same consumption of their time, the same sedentary confinement, would have earned a prize of sufficient value to repay them amply for every effort of diligence. But now they have, perhaps, injured their eyes, ruined their health, neglected their affairs, vitiated their taste, and possibly corrupted their morals, or weakened their faith, with no return but

the amusement of the moment, or the retention of false acts, distorted figures of life and manners, or trifling anecdotes, the lumber of the head and not the furniture.

Persons advanced in life, or labouring under sickness and infirmity, have an unquestionable right to amuse themselves with whatever can innocently alleviate their evils, and enable them to pass away the lagging hours in a sweet oblivion. Their reading, like their diet, may be light, and more adapted to tickle a sickly palate, than to afford solid and substantial nourishment. But in youth, health, and vigour, who would voluntarily confine themselves to the weakness and insipidity of water-gruel? Who would drink poison, when the cup of health and refreshment is at hand?

It is, indeed, lamentable to observe young persons of lively parts, and with a love of reading, devoting those years and those abilities, which might render them valuable members of society, to such studies as tend only to dissipate their ideas, to vitiate their morals, to womanize their spirits, and to render them the dastardly and degenerate sons of those to whom it was once a glorious distinction to bear the name of Britons. There is no doubt but that the reading of the present age has a tendency to cause a decline in public as well as private virtue.

NO. CLIV.—ON A METHOD OF STUDY, WRITTEN BY JOACHIMUS FORTIUS RINGELBERGIUS.

There is a little treatise on the method of study written by Fortius, which, in the last two centuries, was a great favourite among scholars, and contri-

buted much to animate their industry. The learned Erpenius acknowledges himself originally indebted to it for all his acquisitions. He met with it at the age of sixteen, and in consequence of its suggestions, though he was then totally averse from a studious life, and had made no proficiency in learning, yet he afterwards became a distinguished scholar. The treatise had become scarce, and Erpenius generously printed a new edition, that others might partake of the benefit which he had himself enjoyed. He published it with the title of *Liber verè Aureus*, or the Truly Golden Treatise.

In the epistle to the reader, which Erpenius has prefixed, he speaks of the animating effect of the book, in terms so warm, and with so much gratitude, that a student would be wanting to himself not to gratify his curiosity by giving it a perusal. The treatise is short, and contains many passages which tend to encourage the scholar in his pursuits, and to inspire him with an ardour and enthusiasm, like that excited in the soldier by the drum and trumpet, as he is marching on to battle. I believe there could not be found a better exhortation to study for the use of boys, if the good passages were not disgraced by others so ridiculous, as almost bring the writer under the imputation of lunacy. His literary enthusiasm had certainly transported him, in several instances, far beyond the limits of his own improved reason.

I will select a few hints from the little tract, which may not only serve as a curious specimen to the English reader, but may rouse him from his indolence. The whole is, indeed, more valuable for the spirit and fire which it conduces to raise, than for its particular directions. It is rather exhortatory than didactic.

"How mean," says he, speaking of the scope at

which students ought to aim, "how timid, how abject, must be that spirit which can sit down contented with mediocrity! As for myself, all that is within me is on fire. I had rather," he proceeds in his strong manner, "be torn in a thousand pieces, than relax my resolution of reaching the sublimest heights of virtue and knowledge. I am of opinion, that nothing is so arduous, nothing so admirable in human affairs, which may not be obtained by the industry of man. We are descended from heaven; thither let us go, whence we derived our origin. Let nothing satisfy us lower than the summit of all excellence. This summit," says he, "I point out as the proper scope of the student."

"But labour must be a delight, and the pleasures of luxury despised. Shall we submit to be extinguished for ever without honour, without remembrance, ἀνδρώδες οὐδὲν ἐπιδεδεγμένοι, without having done any thing like men?" The whole of this chapter is written in a very uncommon style of literary enthusiasm, and I think it can hardly fail of inflaming a youthful imagination. If such ideas were early infixed in the bosom of an ingenious and ingenuous boy, what improvement in virtue, and in all useful qualities, might not be expected?

"That we must never despair," is the title of his third chapter. "If in our ascent, we should fall headlong a thousand times, we must begin to climb again every time more ardently, and fly to the summit with recruited vigour! Let no one be dejected if he is not conscious of any great advancement at first. The merchant thinks himself happy if, after a ten years' voyage, after a thousand dangers, he at last improves his fortune; and shall we, like poor-spirited creatures, give up all hopes after the first onset. *Quodcunque imperavit animus obtinuit:*

Whatever the mind has commanded itself to do, it has usually obtained its purpose.

"Riches must have no charms, compared to the charms of literature. Poverty is favourable to the success of all literary pursuits. I mean not to throw contempt on money in general, but on that exorbitant wealth which allures the mind from study. But your parents," says he, "would rather choose that you should be guilty of perjury or murder, than not know how to value money.

"The student must be desirous of praise. It is a promising presage of success to be roused by praise when one shall have done well, and to be grieved and incited to higher aims, on finding himself blamed or outdone by another. He who aspires at the summit must be passionately fond of glory.

"Thus have the first qualities, indispensably requisite in a youth devoted to study, been mentioned. He must aim at the highest points, he must love labour, he must never despair, he must despise riches, he must be greedy of praise. It remains that we prescribe the methods. There are, then, three gradations in the modes of study; hearing, teaching, writing. It is a good and easy method to hear, it is a better and easier to teach, and the best and easiest of all to write. Lectures are dull; because it is tedious to confine the liberty of thought to the voice of the reader. But when we teach or write, the very exercise itself precludes all tædium."

Though the treatise of this eccentric author is short, yet to make an useful abbreviation of it would require more room than the limits I usually prescribe to my papers will allow. I mean only to give a little specimen of the spirit in which this very

extraordinary writer has composed his once celebrated treatise. There are certainly many things in it which can scarcely fail to stimulate an honest mind, sincerely and seriously devoted to letters. A severe critic, or a lover of ridicule, will find much, both in the matter and the style, to censure and deride. But still there is something in this writer so honest and so warm, that a good-natured mind cannot help being entertained even with his absurdities, and inclined to overlook them amidst the greater abundance of valuable advice. I believe the copies are not very scarce, and earnestly recommend, both to the young student and the lover of literary curiosities, to devote half an hour to the perusal of it, if it should fall into their hands.

Fortius was a very ingenious man, not only in polite learning and in the sciences, but in the arts of mechanical writing, painting, and engraving. Indeed these were his first pursuits and employments, and he did not apply himself to learning Latin till his seventeenth year; but such was the force of his genius, that he then made a rapid proficiency. He was certainly a man of genius; and though not quite correct in his language, yet he wrote Latin with much more spirit and vivacity than most of the Dutch and German writers of his age. He acquired the Greek language, and could almost repeat Homer from beginning to end. He was well versed in various sciences, and wrote ingeniously upon them; but his tracts are more curious than useful. He would have been an excellent writer, and profound philosopher, had he lived in an age when the follies of judicial astrology were exploded, and hypothesis reduced to the test of experiment.

NO. CLV.—ON THE FOLLY OF SACRIFICING COMFORT TO TASTE.

There are certain homely, but sweet comforts and conveniences, the absence of which no elegance can supply. But as they sometimes have nothing of external splendour, they are sometimes sacrificed to the gratification of vanity. We live too much in the eyes and minds of others, and too little to our own hearts, and too little to our own consciences, and too little to our own satisfaction. We are more anxious to appear, than to be, happy.

According to the present modes of living, and ideas of propriety, an ostentatious appearance must be at all events, and in all instances, supported. If we can preserve a glittering and glossy varnish, we disregard the interior materials and solid substance. Many show a disposition in every part of their conduct, similar to that of the Frenchman, who had rather go without a shirt than without ruffles; rather starve as a count, than enjoy affluence and independence as an honest merchant or manufacturer. Men idolize the great, and the distinctions of fashionable life, with an idolatry so reverential and complete, that they seem to mistake it for their duty towards God. For, to use the words of the Catechism, do they not appear "to believe in them, to fear them, to love them with all their hearts, with all their minds, with all their souls, and with all their strength; to worship them, to give them thanks, to put their whole trust in them, to call upon them, to honour their names and their words, and to serve them truly all the days of their lives?" As they worship false gods, their blessings are of the kind which corresponds with the nature of their deities. They are shadowy and unsubstantial; dreams, bub-

bles, and meteors, which dance before their eyes, and often lead them to perdition.

It is really lamentable to behold families of a competent fortune, and respectable rank, who (while they deny themselves even the common pleasures of a plentiful table; while their kitchen is the cave of cold and famine; while their neighbours, relations, and friends pity and despise, as they pass, the comfortless and inhospitable door) scruple not to be profusely expensive in dress, furniture, building, equipage, at public entertainments, in excursions to Bath, Tunbridge, or Brighthelmstone. To feed the fashionable extravagance, they rob themselves of indulgences which they know to be more truly satisfactory; for who among them returns from the midnight assembly, or from the summer excursion, without complaining of dulness, fatigue, ennui, and insipidity? They have shown themselves, they have seen many fine persons and many fine things; but have they felt the delicious pleasures of domestic peace, the tranquil delights of social intercourse among their neighbours and OLD FRIENDS, at their own towns and villages, the solid satisfactions of a cool collected mind, the comforts arising from a disembarrassed state of finances, and the love and respect of the vicinage in which they were born and bred, and where their family was once respected and beloved?

To run in debt, and be involved in danger of arrests and imprisonment, are, in this age, almost the objects of fashionable ambition. To have an execution in the house, is to be in the same predicament with this baronet and the other lord, or with his grace, the duke. The poor imitator of splendid misery, little greatness, and titled infamy, risques his liberty and last shilling to become a man of taste and fashion. He boasts that he is a happy man, for

he is a man of pleasure; he knows how to enjoy life; he professes the important science called the *sçavoir vivre.* Give him the distinction which, in the littleness and blindness of his soul, he considers as the source of happiness and honour. Allow him his claim to taste, allow him the title of a man of pleasure, and, since he insists upon it, allow him his pretensions to *sçavoir vivre.* But at the same time he cannot deny that he is haunted by his creditors, that he is obliged to hide himself, lest he should lose his liberty; that he is eating the bread and the meat, and wearing the clothes, of those whose children are crying for a morsel, and shivering in rags. If he has brought himself to such a state as to feel no uneasiness when he reflects on his embarrassment, and its consequences to others; he is a base, worthless, and degenerate wretch. But if he is uneasy, where is his happiness? where his exalted enjoyments? How much happier had been this boaster of happiness, this pretender to a life of pleasure, had he lived within the limits of reason, duty, and his fortune, in love and unity with his own regular family, at his own fire-side, beloved, trusted, respected in his neighbourhood, afraid of no creditor or prosecution, nor of any thing else but of doing wrong? He might not, indeed, have made a figure on the turf; he might not have had the honour of leading the fashion; but he would probably have had health, wealth, fame, and peace. Many a man who is seldom seen, and never heard of, enjoys, in the silence and security of privacy, all which this sublunary state can afford to sweeten the cup, and to lighten the burden of life.

In things of an inferior nature, and such as are not immediately connected with moral conduct, the same predilection for external appearance, and the same neglect of solid comfort, when placed in com-

petition with the display of an affected taste, are found to prevail. Our houses are often rendered cold, small, and inconvenient, for the sake of preserving a regularity of external figure, or of copying the architecture of a warmer climate. Our carriages are made dangerous or incommodious, for the sake of attracting the passenger's eye, by something new or singular in their shape, height, or fabric. Our dress is fashioned in uneasy forms, and with troublesome superfluities, or uncomfortable defects, just as the Proteus, Fashion, issues out the capricious edicts of a variable taste. We even eat and drink, see and hear, not according to our own appetites and senses, but as the prevalent taste happens to direct. In this refined age we are all persons of taste, from the hair-dresser and milliner, to the duke and duchess. The question is not what is right, prudent, pleasing, comfortable, but what is the ton and the taste. Hence beggarly finery, and lordly beggary.

The sacrifice of comfort to taste is visible in our modern gardens. I rejoice in the explosion of the Dutch manner. I expatiate with raptured eye and imagination over the noble scenes, as it were, created by a Kent and Brown. But at the same time I lament that our cold climate often renders the sublime and magnificent taste in gardening incompatible with comfort. Winter, as the poet says, often lingers in the lap of May. How pleasing to step out of the house, and bask under a sunny wall covered with bloom, to watch the expansion of a rose-bud, and to see even the humble pea and bean shooting up with all the vigour of vernal fertility! But now the mansion-house stands naked and forlorn. You descend from the flight of steps. You are saluted by the rudest breath of Eurus and Boreas. No trees, no walls, no out-houses, even the

kitchen and offices subterraneous. Not a corner to seek the genial warmth of a meridian sun. Fine prospects indeed all around. But you cannot stay to look at them. You fly to your chimney corner, happy if the persecuting blast pursues you not to your last recess. We allow all that taste can claim. We admire and love her beauties; but they are dearly bought at the expense of those comforts, warmth and shelter.

A little and enclosed garden adds greatly to the real enjoyment of a rural retreat. Though taste has thrown down the walls, and laid all open, I venture to predict, that before the lapse of half a century, good sense and the love of comfort will rebuild them. The grounds beyond may still be laid out in the grandest and most beautiful style; but let the house stand near some little cultivated spot, where every vegetable beauty and delicacy may be displayed, and where the rigours of our inclement clime may be softened with elegant enclosures. The contrast between this, which I would call the domestic, and the other, which might be named the outer garden, or the grove, would produce an effect by no means unpleasing. They who have no taste for flowers, and the thousand beauties of an enclosed garden, have but little pretension to judgement in the graces of horticulture.

Indeed, such is the nature of man, we commonly advance improvement to the verge of impropriety. We now loathe the idea of a straight line, and a regular row of trees. But let us not, in the pride of our hearts, flatter ourselves with the unerring rectitude of our taste. Many of the ancients who possessed the best taste, not only in poetry and eloquence, but in arts, in painting, sculpture, architecture, were great admirers of plantations perfectly regular, and laid out in quincunxes. However va-

nity and fashion may dictate and declaim, the world will not always believe that Homer, Virgil, Cyrus, Cicero, Bacon, and Temple, who all admired regularity in plantations, were totally mistaken in their ideas of horticultural beauty.

Cicero informs us, in a fine quotation from Xenophon's œconomics, that when Lysander came to Cyrus, a prince equally distinguished for his glorious empire and his genius, Cyrus showed him a piece of ground *well enclosed and completely planted.* After the visitor had admired the tall and straight trees, and the rows regularly formed in a quincunx, and the ground clear of weeds and well cultivated, and the sweetness of the odours which exhaled from the flowers, he could not help expressing his admiration not only of the diligence, but the skill of him by whom all this was measured and marked out: upon which Cyrus answered, "It was myself who *measured* every thing, the *rows* of trees are of my disposing, the plan is mine, and many of the trees were planted with my own hand." An illustrious pattern, which I hope our English noblemen and gentlemen will not be afraid to follow. Why always employ a professed plan-maker? Why sacrifice their own amusement and inclination to the will of another, and to the imperious edicts of capricious fashion? Why sacrifice comfort and common sense to the idol fashion? A house and garden which may be delightful in Italy may be fit only for a temple of Æolus, and a place for wild beasts to take their pastime, in the cold and uncertain climate of England.

NO. CLVI.—ON THE EXAMPLE OF HENRY THE FIFTH, AND THE BAD EFFECTS OF AN OPINION THAT A PROFLIGATE YOUTH IS LIKELY TO TERMINATE IN A WISE MANHOOD.

There are those who consider early profligacy as a mark of that spirit which seldom fails to produce, in the subsequent periods of life, a wise and a virtuous character. The example of Henry the fifth is often cited in confirmation of their opinion. Shakespeare has indeed represented his errors and reformation in so amiable a light, that many are not very much displeased when they see a young man beginning his career in riot and debauchery. While there is an appearance of spirit they regard not the vice.

The example of Henry the fifth has been applied particularly to heirs apparent of the crown. If a future king is found to be early initiated in the excesses of sensuality, it is a favourable presage, say the myrmidons around him, and we are referred to the example of Falstaff's Hal. If he devote his time to drinking, and be actually involved in perpetual intoxication, it is all the better, for do we not recollect Hal's exploits at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap? Dame Quickly, Doll Tearsheet, are illustrious instances to prove what company a prince should keep in order to become hereafter a great king. It is in the haunts of intemperance and vice, and in the company of sycophants and knaves, that he is, according to the vulgar phrase, to sow his wild oats, to spend the exuberance of his spirit, to subdue the ebullition of his blood, and to acquire a valuable species of moral experience.

It is true, indeed, that Henry the fifth is a re-

markable instance of early profligacy and subsequent reformation. He is a remarkable, because he is a rare instance. For one who reforms and succeeds as he did, a thousand become either incurable debauchees, drunkards, and rogues, ruin their character and fortunes, or die under the operation of so rough an experiment. We hear not of those who are obliged to go to sea, to hide themselves on the continent, to skulk in the garrets of blind alleys, to spend their days in gaols, or are early carried to the church-yard amidst the thanks and rejoicings of their friends for so happy a deliverance from shame and ruin. But if one wild youth becomes but a tolerable good man, we are struck with the metamorphosis, as we are with every thing uncommon. We exaggerate his goodness, by comparing it with his previous depravity. We cite the example, as a consolatory topic, wherever we behold a young man, as the Scripture beautifully expresses it, walking in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes. We talk as if we almost congratulated a parent, when his son has spirit enough to violate, not only the rules of decency, but also the most sacred laws of morality and religion: an egregious folly, a most pernicious error.

Such fatal ideas have broken the heart of many a virtuous and feeling father. They have brought his hairs, before they were gray, to the grave. I have been much pleased with a passage in the sermons of the late Dr. Ogden, in which he recommends regularity and virtue to young men solely for the sake of their parents. "Stop, young man," says he, "stop a little, to look towards thy poor parents. Think it not too much to bestow a moment's reflection on those who never forget thee. Recollect what they have done for thee. Remember all—all indeed thou canst not: alas! ill had

been thy lot, had not their care begun before thou couldst remember or know any thing.

"Now so proud, self-willed, inexorable, then couldst thou only ask by wailing, and move them with thy tears. And they were moved. Their hearts were touched with thy distress; they relieved and watched thy wants before thou knewest thine own necessities, or their kindness. They clothed thee; thou knewest not that thou wast naked: thou askedst not for bread; but they fed thee. And ever since—for the particulars are too many to be recounted, and too many surely to be all utterly forgotten—it has been the very principal endeavour, employment, and study of their lives to do service unto thee. If by all these endeavours they can obtain their child's comfort, they arrive at the full accomplishment of their wishes. They have no higher object of their ambition. Be thou but happy, and they are so.

"And now tell me, is not something to be done, I do not now say for thyself, but for them? If it be too much to desire of thee to be good, and wise, and virtuous, and happy for thy own sake; yet be happy for theirs. Think that a sober, upright, and, let me add, religious life, besides the blessings it will bring upon thy own head, will be a fountain of unfeigned comfort to thy declining parents, and make the heart of the aged sing for joy.

"What shall we say? which of these is happier? the son that maketh a glad father? or the father blessed with such a son?

"Fortunate young man! who hast a heart open so early to virtuous delights, and canst find thy own happiness in returning thy father's blessing upon his own head!

"And happy father! whose years have been prolonged, not, as it often happens, to see his comforts

fall from him, one after another, and to become at once old and destitute; but to taste a new pleasure, not to be found among the pleasures of youth, reserved for his age, to reap the harvest of all his cares and labours, in the duty, affection, and felicity of his dear child. His very look bespeaks the inward satisfaction of his heart. The infirmities of his age sit light on him. He feels not the troubles of life: he smiles at the approach of death: sees himself still living and honoured in the memory and the person of his son, his other dearer self; and passes down to the receptacle of all the living, in the fulness of content and joy.

"How unlike to this is the condition of him who has the affliction to be the father of a wicked offspring! Poor, unhappy man! no sorrow is like unto thy sorrow. Diseases and death are blessings, if compared with the anguish of thy heart, when thou seest thy dear children run heedlessly and headlong in the ways of sin, forgetful of their parents' counsel and their own happiness. Unfortunate old man! How often does he wish he had never been born, or had been cut off before he was a father! No reflection is able to afford him consolation. He grows old betimes; and the afflictions of age are doubled on his head. In vain are instruments of pleasure brought forth. His soul refuses comfort. Every blessing of life is lost upon him. No success is able to give him joy. His triumphs are like that of David: while his friends, captains, soldiers, were rending the air with shouts of victory—he, poor conqueror, went up, as it is written, to the chamber over the gate and wept: and as he went, thus he said; O, my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

I have introduced this passage, with a hope that

gay and thoughtless young men may be properly affected by it; and though they should have no regard for themselves, that they should be led to have pity on their poor parents, and to choose the right way, that they may not cause affliction to him who has often dandled them in his arms, nor to her at whose breast they hung in the sweet and innocent period of their infancy. It is indeed a melancholy consideration that many children, who have been the delight of their parents during the earlier ages, no sooner arrive at maturity, than they prove a scourge and a curse. They hurry those out of the world who brought them into it. They imbitter the old age of those who devoted the health and strength of manhood to their welfare and support. Sad return! to plant the pillow of declining age with thorns!—O have pity, have pity on your father—behold him with tottering step approaching you! With suppliant hands, and tears in his eyes, he begs you—to do what? to be good and happy. O spare him, wipe away his tears: make him happy, be so yourself,—so, when it shall be your turn to be a father, may you never feel the pangs you have already inflicted!

There are parents, indeed, who seem to have little concern but for the pecuniary interest or worldly advancement of their children. While their children excel in dress, address, simulation, and dissimulation, they are allowed to be as debauched and immoral as they please. While they possess a poor, mean, and contemptible kind of wisdom, commonly called the knowledge of the world, their parents are perfectly easy; though they should be notoriously guilty of every base artifice, and plunged in the grossest and most unlawful species of sensuality. That poor man, lord Chesterfield, was one of those parents who are ready to sacrifice their

children's honour, conscience, and salvation, for the sake of gaining a little share of the little honours and riches of a world, where not even the highest honours or the most abundant riches are comparable to the possession of an honest heart. That wretched lord seems to have entertained very little natural affection for his offspring. His paternal attention was all avarice and ambition. He would probably have been delighted if his son had been at an early age a debauchee with all the false spirit of a fashionable profligate. He would have thought the spirit which vice displayed a sure prognostic of future eminence. Providence defeated his purpose, and permitted his letters to be exhibited as a loathsome monument of wickedness, vanity, and worldly wisdom. Such wisdom is indeed usually folly, even where its effects and consequences are confined to the present period of existence.

Every father, then, and every mother who deserves that tender and venerable appellation, will strenuously endeavour, whatever have been their own errors and vices, to preserve those whom they have introduced into a troublesome world from the foul contagion and pollution of vice. If they have any regard for their children, for their country, for themselves, they will use every probable means to rescue the rising generation from profligacy. Selfish motives often prevail when all others are inefficacious. I repeat then, that, for their own sakes, they must guard their offspring from riot, intemperance, and prodigality. If they are misguided by the example of any reformed rake, so as to encourage their children in evil, or even to be negligent of them, they will probably repent in the day of old age, and find poverty, shame, and anguish superadded to the weight of years, and the unavoidable evils of a natural decay.

NO. CLVII.—A GOOD HEART NECESSARY TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

By a just dispensation of Providence, it happens that they who are unreasonably selfish, seldom enjoy so much happiness as the generous and contented. Almost all the wicked deviate from the line of rectitude, that they may engross an extraordinary portion of some real or imaginary advantage. Their hearts are agitated in the pursuit of it with the most violent and painful emotions; and their eagerness, apprehensions, and solicitude, poison the enjoyment after they have obtained the possession. The nature of their pleasures is at best gross, sensual, violent, and of course transitory. They are always dissatisfied, always envious, always malignant. Their souls are bent down to the earth, and destitute of all elevated and heavenly ideas, *cœlestium inanes.* They have not powers of perception for the sublime or refined satisfactions; and are no less insensible to the tranquil delights of innocence and simplicity, than the deaf and blind to the beauty of colours and the melody of music.

To the wicked, and indeed to all who are warmly engaged in the vulgar pursuits of the world, the contemplation of rural scenes, and indeed all the pleasures of innocence and simplicity, are perfectly insipid. The odour of flowers, the purling of streams, the song and plumage of birds, the sportive innocence of the lamb, the fidelity of the dog, are incapable of attracting, for one moment, the notice of him whose conscience is uneasy and passions unsubdued. Invite him to a morning walk through a neighbouring wood, and he begs to be excused; for he loves his pillow, and can see no charms in trees. Endeavour to allure him on a vernal evening, when,

after a shower, every leaf breathes fragrance and freshness, to saunter with you in the garden, and he pleads an engagement at whist or at the bottle. Bid him listen to the thrush, the blackbird, the nightingale, the woodlark, and he interrupts you by asking the price of stocks, and inquiring whether the West India fleet is arrived. As you walk over the meadows enamelled with cowslips and daisies, he takes no other notice, but inquires who is the owner, how much the land lets for an acre, or what hay and oxen sold for at the last market. He prefers the gloomiest day in November on which pecuniary business is transacted, or a feast celebrated, or a public diversion afforded, to all the delights of the merry month of May. He who is constantly engaged in gratifying his lust, or in gaming, becomes in a short time so very wise, as to consider the study of the works of God in the creation, and the external beauty both of vegetable and animated nature, as little superior to a childish entertainment. How grave his aspect! No Solon ever looked so sapient as he does when he is on the point of making a bet, or insidiously plotting a bargain or an intrigue. One might conclude, from his air of importance, that man was born to shake the dice, to shuffle the cards, to drink claret, and to destroy, by debauchery, the innocence of individuals and the peace of families. Ignorant and mistaken wretch! He knows not that purity and simplicity of heart would furnish him with delights, which, while they render his life tranquil and pleasurable, would enable him to resign his soul at death into the hands of his Maker unpolluted. What stains and filth it usually contracts by an indiscriminate commerce with the world! how comparatively pure it would be amidst the genuine pleasures of a rural and philosophical life!

As a preservative of innocence, and as the means

of a most agreeable pastime, the love of birds, flowers, plants, trees, gardens, animals, when it appears in boys, as indeed it usually does, should be encouraged, and in a subordinate degree cultivated. Farewel innocence, when such things cease to be capable of affording pleasure! The heart gradually becomes hardened and corrupted, when its objects are changed to those of a worldly, a sordid, and a sensual nature.

Man may, indeed, be amused in the days of health and vigour with the common pursuits of ordinary life, those of avarice and ambition; but they have too much agitation in them for the feeble powers of old age. Amusements are then required which are gentle, yet healthy; capable of engaging the thoughts, yet requiring no painful or continued exertion. Happy he who has acquired and preserved to that age a taste for simple pleasures. A fine day, a beautiful garden, a flowery field, are to him enjoyments similar in species and degree to the bliss of Elysium. A farm-yard, with all its inhabitants, constitutes a most delightful scene, and furnishes him with a thousand entertaining ideas. The man who can see without pleasure a hen gather her chickens under her wing, or the train of ducklings following their parent into a pond, is like him who has no music in his soul, and who, according to Shakespeare, is fit for treasons, murders, every thing that can disgrace and degrade humanity. *Vetabo iisdem sub trabibus, fragilemque mecum solvat phaselum:* I will forbid him, says Horace on another occasion, to be under the same roof with me, or to embark in the same vessel.

Let it operate as an additional motive in stimulating us to preserve our innocence, that with our innocence we preserve our sensibility to the charms of nature. It is indeed one of the rewards of inno-

cence, that it is enabled to taste the purest pleasure which this world can bestow, without the usual consequences of pleasures, remorse and satiety. The man of a bad heart can find no delight but in bad designs and bad actions—nominal joys and real torments. His very amusements are of necessity connected with the injury of others, and with a thousand painful sensations which no language can express. But the mind of the honest, simple, and ingenuous, is gay and enlivened, like some of the southern climates, with a serenity almost perpetual. Let a man who would form an adequate idea on the different states of the good and bad heart, with respect to happiness, compare the climate of Otaheite with that of Terra del Fuego, as described by our British circumnavigators.

NO. CLVIII.—ON AFFECTATION OF EXTREME DELICACY AND SENSIBILITY.

EXTREME delicacy of sentiment, so esteemed at present, seems to have been unknown in times of manly virtue in remote antiquity. It is certainly a great refinement on human nature; and refinements are never attended to in the earlier ages, when the occupations of war, and the wants of unimproved life, leave little opportunity and less inclination for fanciful enjoyments. Danger and distress require strength of mind, and necessarily exclude an attention to those delicate qualities of the mind or body, which, while they please, infallibly enervate.

That tenderness of feeling which is amiable in a state of perfect civilization, is despised as a weakness among unpolished nations. Shocked at the smallest circumstances which are disagreeable, it cannot sup-

port the idea of danger and alarm. So far from exercising the severities which are sometimes politically necessary in a rude state, it starts with horror from the sight, and at the description of them. It delights in the calm occupations of rural life, and would gladly resign the spear and the shield for the shepherd's crook and the lover's garland. But in an uninformed community, where constant danger requires constant defence, those dispositions which delight in ease and retirement will be treated with general contempt; and no temper of mind or habit of manners which is despised will be long epidemical.

The ancient Greeks and Romans were the most civilized people on the earth. They, however, were unacquainted with that extreme delicacy of sentiment which is become universally prevalent in modern times. Perhaps some reasonable causes may be assigned. The Stoic philosophy endeavoured to introduce a total apathy, and though it was not embraced in all its rigour by the vulgar, yet it had a sufficient number of votaries to diffuse a general affectation of insensibility. It perhaps originally meant no more than to teach men to govern their affections by the dictates of reason; but as a natural want of feeling produced the same effects as a rational regulation of the passions, real insensibility soon passed among the vulgar for what it had no claim to, a philosophical indifference.

That respectful attention to women, which in modern times is called gallantry, was not usually found among the ancients. Women were unjustly considered, in some civilized countries, as inferior beings, whose only duty was to contribute to pleasure and to superintend domestic œconomy. It was not till the days of chivalry that men showed that desire of pleasing the softer sex which seems to allow them a superiority. This deference to women

refines the manners and softens the temper; and it is no wonder that the ancients, who admitted not women to their social conversations, should acquire a roughness of manners incompatible with delicacy of sentiment, and tending in some degree to brutal ferocity.

Men who acted, thought, and spoke, like the ancients, were unquestionably furnished by nature with every feeling in great perfection. But their mode of education contributed rather to harden than to mollify their hearts. Politics and war were the only general objects of pursuit. Ambition, it is well known, renders all other passions subservient to itself; and the youth who had been accustomed to a military discipline, and had endured the hardships of a campaign, though he might yield to the allurements of pleasure, would not have time to cultivate the refinements of delicacy. But the modern soldier, in the present mode of conducting war, is not always compelled to undergo many personal hardships either in the preparation for his profession, or in the exercise of it. Commerce, but little known to many ancient nations, gives the moderns an opportunity of acquiring opulence, without much difficulty or danger; and the infinite numbers who inherit this opulence, have recourse, in order to pass away life with ease, to the various arts of exciting pleasure. The professions of divinity and law leave sufficient time, opportunity, and inclination to most of their professors for the pursuit of every innocent amusement and gratification. The general plan of modern education, which, among the liberal, consists of the study of poets and sentimental writers, contributes, perhaps, more than all other causes, to humanize the heart and refine the sentiments; for, at the period when education is commenced, the heart is most susceptible of impressions.

Whatever disposition tends to soften, without weakening the mind, must be cherished; and it must be allowed that an unaffected delicacy of sentiment, on this side the extreme, adds greatly to the happiness of mankind, by diffusing benevolence. It teaches men to feel for others as for themselves; it disposes them to rejoice with the happy, and, by partaking, to increase their pleasure. It frequently excludes the malignant passions, which are the sources of the greatest misery in life. It excites a pleasing sensation in our own breasts, which, if its duration be considered, may be placed among the highest gratifications of sense. The only ill consequence that can be apprehended from it is, that, when carried to extremes, it may produce an effeminacy of mind, which may disqualify for vigorous pursuits and manly exertions.

In the most successful course of things, obstacles will impede, and disagreeable circumstances disgust. To bear these without feeling them, is sometimes necessary in the right conduct of life; but he who is tremblingly alive all over, and whose sensibility approaches to soreness, avoids the contest in which he knows he must be hurt. He feels injuries never committed, and resents affronts never intended. Disgusted with men and manners, he either seeks retirement to indulge his melancholy, or, weakened by continual chagrin, conducts himself with folly and imprudence, and gives offence to all around him.

How, then, shall we avoid the extreme of a disposition, which, in the due medium, is productive of the most salutary consequences? In this excess, as well as all others, reason must be called in to moderate. Sensibility must not be permitted to sink us into such a state of indolence, as effectually represses those manly sentiments, which may very well consist

with the most delicate. In the true hero the greatest mildness is commonly united with the greatest fortitude. Tenderness, joined with resolution, forms, indeed, a finished character, to which reason, co-operating with nature, may easily attain by due attention.

The affectation of great sensibility is extremely common. It is, however, as odious as the reality is amiable. It renders a man detestable, and a woman less lovely. Instead of relieving the afflicted, which is the necessary effect of genuine sympathy, a character of this sort flies from misery, to show that it is too delicate to support the sight of distress. The appearance of a toad, or the jolting of a carriage, will cause a paroxysm of fear. It often pretends to a superior share of refinement and philanthropy. But it is remarkable, that this delicacy and tenderness often disappear in solitude, and the pretender to uncommon sensibility is frequently found, in the absence of witnesses, to be uncommonly unfeeling.

To have received a tender heart from the hand of nature, is to have received the means of the highest enjoyment. To have regulated its emotions by the dictates of reason, is to have acted up to the dignity of man, and to have obtained the happiness of which the heart was constituted susceptible. May a temper thus laudable in itself, never be rendered contemptible by affectation, or injurious to its possessor and to others through the want of a proper guidance!

NO. CLIX.—ON TRUE PATIENCE, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM INSENSIBILITY.

However common, and however intense, the evils of human life may be, certain it is, that evils equally great do not affect all men with an equal degree of anguish; and the different manner of sustaining evils, arises from one of these two causes, a natural insensibility, or an adventitious fortitude, acquired by the exertion of Patience.

Apathes, when a school-boy, was not remarkable for quickness of apprehension or brilliancy of wit; but, though his progress was slow, it was sure, and the additional opportunities of study, which he enjoyed by a freedom from those avocations which vivacity and warmth of constitution occasion, made him a tolerably good scholar. The sullenness of his deportment, however, alienated the affections of his teachers; and, upon the slightest misdemeanours, he often underwent the punishment of the rod, which he always bore without a tear and without complaint.

He had not long been at school, before his father and mother died of a contagious fever. Preparatory to the disclosure of so mournful an event to an orphan son, many precautions were taken, many phrases of condolence studied. At length, the master took him aside, and, after several observations on the instability of human affairs, the suddenness of death, the necessity of submission to Providence, and the inefficacy of sorrow, told him that his parents were no more. To this young Apathes replied, by observing, without any visible alteration in his countenance, that he suspected something of that kind had happened, as he had not received his letters at the usual time; but that he had not said any thing

on the subject, as he thought his being possessed of a fine fortune by the event, was a matter that concerned nobody but himself. "For," says he, "as the death was sudden, there probably was no will, and my father being pretty warm, as they call it, and I being an only son, I think I shall be very well off." Here he was interrupted by his master, who was now desirous of some degree of that grief which he had before been solicitous to prevent—"And are you not affected," said he, "with the loss of the dearest friends you had in the world?"—"Why, Sir," replied the insensible, "you have just now been teaching me to submit to Providence, and telling me we must all die, and the like; and do I not practise your precepts?" The master was too much astonished to be able to answer, and hastily left the young man; who probably concluded the day with a feast of gingerbread, or a game at marbles.

Soon after he left school, he took it into his head to enter into the state of matrimony. But here let the gentle reader be informed, that he was not induced to submit his neck to the yoke by any of those fine feelings which constitute love. The object of his choice had ten thousand pounds; and he considered that ten thousand pounds would pay for the lady's board. When the little prattlers were arrived at that age when none can behold them without pleasure, they were seized with an unfavourable small-pox, and severally carried from the cradle to the grave. The constant attendance of the mother on this occasion brought on a fever, which, together with a weakness occasioned by an advanced state of pregnancy, proved fatal. Then, at last, Apathes was observed to fetch a sigh, and lift up his hands to heaven—at the sight of the undertaker's bill. A thousand misfortunes in business

have fallen to his lot, all which he has borne with seeming fortitude. He is now, at length, reduced to that state in which gentlemen choose to take lodgings within the purlieus of St. George's Fields: but there is no alteration in his features; he still sings his song, takes his glass, and laughs at those silly mortals who weary themselves in wandering up and down the world without control.

Thus Apathes affords a striking instance of that power of bearing afflictions which arises from natural insensibility. Sophron will give us a better idea of patience as a virtue.

From that period at which the mind begins to think, Sophron was remarkable for a quality which, in children, is called shamefacedness. He could never enter a room full of company without showing his distress, by a violent suffusion of blushes. At school he avoided the commission of faults, rather through fear of shame than of punishment. In short, an exquisite sensibility, at the same time that it gave him the most exalted delight, frequently exposed him to the keenest affliction. Thus, from being acquainted with grief, though a stranger to misfortune, he acquired a habit of bearing evils before any heavy ones befel him.

Sophron was designed for a literary life, which, to the generality of mankind, appears almost exempt from the common attacks of ill-fortune: but if there were no other instances of the peculiar miseries of the student, Sophron alone might evince the groundlessness of such an opinion. From a sanguine temper, he was prone to anticipate success; and, from an enterprising disposition, was little inclined to sit down contented without a considerable share of reputation. Influenced by his love of fame, he ventured to appeal to the public taste, and actually sent into the world a performance of great me-

rit: but as the work wanted some popular attractions, it was soon neglected, and sunk into oblivion.

An evil of this kind, perhaps, the merchant or the manufacturer may treat with contempt. They however, who, with the same feelings, have been in the same predicament, will know the anguish which secretly tormented the disconsolate Sophron. This disappointment was the first affliction of his life, and on this he long meditated without intermission. He has not again ventured to publish, and therefore has had no cause of uneasiness from the ingratitude of the many-headed monster: but the evils of his private life have been numerous and afflictive beyond conception. The death of an amiable wife, a constant state of sickness, expectations continually disappointed, have occurred to overwhelm him—but all their efforts have been fruitless. The reflections of philosophy and religion fortify him against every attack, and I never visit him without observing a placid smile of resignation diffused on his countenance. He is sensible of the real weight of every evil, and at the same time sustains it with alacrity. He draws resources from himself in every emergency, and with the nicest feelings bears his misfortunes with indifference.

This is genuine patience; and, though the former may by some be thought a happiness, the latter only can be esteemed a virtue.

Sensibility, with all its inconveniences, is to be cherished by those who understand and wish to maintain the dignity of their nature. To feel for others, disposes us to exercise the amiable virtue of charity; which our religion indispensably requires. It constitutes that enlarged benevolence which philosophy inculcates, and which is indeed comprehended in Christian charity. It is the privilege and

ornament of man; and the pain which it causes is abundantly recompensed by that sweet sensation which ever accompanies the exercise of beneficence.

To feel our own misery in a lively manner, is not to be deprecated. Affliction softens and improves the heart. Tears, to speak in the style of figure, fertilize the soil in which the virtues grow. And it is the remark of one who understood human nature, that the faculties of the mind, as well as the feelings of the heart, are meliorated by adversity.

But, in order to promote these ends, our sufferings must not be permitted to overwhelm us. We must oppose them with the arms of reason and religion; and, to express the idea in the language of the philosopher, as well as the poet, of nature, every one, while he is compelled to feel his misfortunes like a man, should resolve also to bear them like a man.

NO. CLX.—CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ELOQUENCE OF THE PULPIT. [IN A LETTER.]

ELOQUENCE is numbered among those arts which, instead of making a progressive improvement in the course of revolving ages, have greatly receded from their original excellence.

The funeral orations and panegyrics of a few Frenchmen, are the only pieces among the moderns which make pretensions to rhetorical composition in the highest style. These, however, appear very elaborate and unnatural; whether from the barrenness of the subjects, or from the weakness of the orators, is foreign to our purpose to determine.

From whatever cause it proceeds, it appears, that ancient eloquence is not restored by those efforts which are allowed to have been most successful.

In England, so generally is a taste for solid argument and close reasoning diffused, that mere flights of imagination, when unsupported by truth and argument, are little attended to. Thus, it has been said, we have no truly classical history of our own country. Elaborate collections of facts, proceedings of parliament, and accurate descriptions of our navies and armaments, fill up, with a jejune detail, some of our most celebrated histories. A great deal of sagacity has, indeed, been exerted in the adjustment of contested æras, unwearied labour in illustrating obscure passages in our annals, and much patience in the examination of our records. But where, after all, is the painting of a Livy, and the concise elegance of a Sallust?

It is not therefore surprising, that a people who admit not unnecessary embellishments in matters of taste, and who can fall in love with naked truth even when she is at liberty to dress herself in the garb of fancy, should reject mere ornamental flourishes in the important transactions of political debate, and the serious proceedings of a court of judicature.

Thus the eloquence of the ancients is not, perhaps, to be found either in the senate or the forum of Britain.—There is, indeed, a very great degree of merit in many of the harangues spoken in those places, but they come not up to the idea of Grecian or Roman eloquence. The defect, however, is probably not so much owing to the want of ability, as to a voluntary compliance with the taste and genius of the nation.

In the pulpit, indeed, we may find some vestiges of ancient oratory: but, waving at present the in-

quiry whether or not we resemble the ancients in this point, I shall proceed to transcribe a few observations on pulpit eloquence in general, which I collected not long ago by accident.

One evening last autumn, as I was walking in the fields near the city, to enjoy a little fresh air, I observed a man, somewhat advanced in years, and of a composed aspect, sauntering in the same path with myself, seemingly in profound meditation. For a considerable time neither of us chose to commence a conversation; till at length, when a tacit familiarity between us had removed the reserve of strangeness, the old man opened with an usual introductory topic, the serenity of the evening. For my own part, I never refuse to join in one of the most reasonable, as well as most agreeable, pleasures of human life. By degrees, the severity of my companion's countenance brightened up as the conversation grew warm, and he told me he had just been hearing an excellent sermon at an evening lecture, and, as was his usual way, had taken this little turn in the fields to meditate on serious subjects without interruption. I must own I was rather startled at hearing this, apprehending I had fallen into the company of some methodistical enthusiast, who would endeavour to make a proselyte; but, upon farther conversation, I found myself agreeably mistaken. The old man made some reflections, which, as they struck me at the time, I entered among my minutes as soon as I returned home.

"You must know, Sir," said he, "that I am an old-fashioned man. I go to church on Wednesdays and Fridays, according to my good old grandmother's directions, who (well I remember it) used always to appoint me the bearer of her large print prayer-book bound in purple morocco. To these early impressions, perhaps, I owe all my oddities;

and you will easily imagine what a queer fellow I am, when I inform you, that I put my family to the inconvenience of dining, on Sundays, a full hour sooner than common, for no other reason in the world but that I may do my duty towards my Maker, by going to church in the afternoon. On week days, while my neighbours are at the play-house or the tavern, I can make shift to kill time at an evening lecture; and I often follow a famous preacher of a charity sermon with all the ardour with which a favourite player inspires the frequenters of theatrical entertainments. These are my usual diversions, and really, Sir, they have some advantages attending them. In the first place, they are not expensive; for what is a shilling thrown away now and then upon a trifling whim, since every man has his hobby-horse; such as relieving a suffering fellow-creature, or contributing to the education and support of a poor orphan? Secondly, I can go into any church within the Bills of Mortality, without danger of being pushed, and squeezed, and trodden upon, and stifled to death, as sometimes happens to those who follow more fashionable diversions; nay, and I can sit the whole time without being in the least overheated.

"Now, Sir, as I have constantly attended to various sorts of public eloquence, I suppose I may pretend, without vanity, to be some judge of it. Do not, however, expect that I shall bring proofs of the justness of my remarks from your Aristotles, your Tullies, or your Quintilians; for I am a plain common man, and if I have any sense, God knows it is only plain common sense.

"Let me premise, that I shall now and then make use of the usual terms of division and subdivision. Such, for instance, as those edifying little

words, First, secondly, thirdly, to conclude, to come to my next head, and the like. Consider, Sir, I have been long used to this style, and naturally run into it.

"Of preachers, I shall reckon four kinds; the Fine Man, the Pretty Preacher, the Good Textman, and the Humdrum.

"First then of the first (forgive my sermonical style), namely, of the FINE MAN:

"A stentorophonic voice is the fundamental excellence of your Fine Man, and a powerful excellence it is. No sooner has the Fine Man uttered the pathetic and significant phrase, 'to conclude,' than I have seen the whole row of matrons, in the aisle, wiping their eyes. The next qualification is flexibility of joints and muscles. From this excellence arise those violent contortions of the body, that wringing of the hands, beating of the breast, rolling of the eyes, foaming of the mouth, and other symptoms of madness, which never fail to gain the applause of the plebeian congregation. The next—but what am I about, Sir? In truth, I cannot recollect any real excellencies; as for sense, learning, argument, these are not to be expected in your Fine Man: but then the want of these is abundantly supplied by noise, nonsense, and grimace.

"To come to my second head. Secondly then, as was before laid down, we treat of the PRETTY PREACHER.

"The Pretty Preacher is an imitator of the Fine Man. As a copy, he is sometimes fainter than the original. He whines, he sobs, he roars, but roars like any nightingale, as Shakespeare has it. A soft effeminate voice, a pretty face (for look ye, Sir, a pretty face is a more powerful persuasive than the

arguments of a Chillingworth), and a white handkerchief, are the constituent parts of a Pretty Preacher.

"These two sorts of Preachers are complete masters of the passions, without in the least addressing the understanding. In truth, I cannot help comparing them to a fiddler of old time I remember to have heard of at school, who made stocks and stones dance minuets, and rivers run the wrong way, and played a hundred such pranks merely by sound of the fiddle-strings. Just in the same manner a Fine Man, and a Pretty Preacher, can force the tear from the eye, and the shilling from the inmost recesses of the pocket, by dint of sound, which, in this case, is very seldom the echo of sense.

"To come to my third head. Thirdly, then, the GOOD TEXTMAN lays down good plain rules of morality, and confirms every precept by a quotation from holy writ. The grace of elocution he never aims at. Rhetorical flourishes, new remarks, or beautiful language, are not to be required of him. In short, the intelligent part of the congregation will seldom find their understandings enlightened, or their fancy amused, by him; but the plain sober-minded Christian, provided he can distinguish what the preacher says, may carry away something for his edification.

"To conclude with my fourth and last head. The HUMDRUM seems to consider preaching and praying as a kind of work, which if he performs so as to get his wages, he is satisfied. He reads the liturgy as he would read a news-paper. In his preaching, he endeavours neither to please, to strike, nor to convince, but thinks the duty sufficiently well done, if it is but done according to the rubrick, and at the established seasons. To give him his due,

he commonly preaches the best divinity in the language; for as he is too lazy to compose, he has nothing to do but to make choice of the most celebrated compositions of others. He, however, murders every sentence he reads. For the most part, he chooses doctrinal rather than practical discourses; but the misfortune is, that while he is making the mysteries as clear as the sun at noonday, his audience is commonly asleep as fast as a church. In a word, you may form some idea of this kind of preacher, by taking a view of Hogarth's print of the sleepy congregation, where there is a Humdrum holding forth, so as effectually to infuse peace and quietness into the minds of his hearers."

Here the old man's avocations obliged him to conclude the conversation, with expressing a wish, "That men of virtue and learning, as the clergy generally are, would not suffer the effect of their excellent prayers and discourses, which, if well delivered, might reform the world, to be in a great measure lost through indifference or affectation."

The several descriptions of preachers in this essay were of well-known *public characters* at the time it was written. They have long ago been silenced by death: and I know not that they have, in the present times, any imitators.

NO. CLXI.—ON THE SUPERIOR VALUE OF SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

A Dialogue of the Dead between Cicero and Lord Chesterfield.

Esse quam videri.——SALL.

Cicero. MISTAKE me not. I know how to value the sweet courtesies of life. Affability, attention, decorum of behaviour, if they have not been ranked by philosophers among the virtues, are certainly related to them, and have a powerful influence in promoting social happiness. I have recommended them, as well as yourself. But I contend, and no sophistry shall prevail upon me to give up this point, that, to be truly amiable, they must proceed from goodness of heart.—Assumed by the artful to serve the purposes of private interest, they degenerate to contemptible grimace, and detestable hypocrisy.

Chest. Excuse me, my dear Cicero; I cannot enter farther into the controversy at present. I have a hundred engagements at least; and see yonder my little elegant French Comtesse. I promised her and myself the pleasure of a promenade. Pleasant walking enough in these elysian groves. So much good company too, that if it were not that the canaille are apt to be troublesome, I should not much regret the distance from the Thuilleries.——But adieu, mon cher ami, for I see Madame **** is joining the party. Adieu, adieu!

Cic. Contemptible fop!

Chest. Ah! what do I hear? Recollect that I am a man of honour, unused to the pity or the insults

of an upstart, a *novus homo*. But perhaps your exclamation was not meant of me—if so, why—

Cic. I am as little inclined to insult as to flatter you. Your levity excited my indignation; but my compassion for the degeneracy of human nature, exhibited in your instance, absorbs my contempt.

Chest. I could be a little angry, but as *bienséance* forbids it, I will be a philosopher for once.—A-propos, pray how do you reconcile your—what shall I call it—your unsmooth address to those rules of decorum, that gentleness of manners, of which you say you know and teach the propriety as well as myself?

Cic. To confess the truth, I would not advance the external embellishment of manners to extreme refinement. Ornamental education, or an attention to the graces, has a connexion with effeminacy. In acquiring the gentleman, I would not lose the spirit of a man. There is a gracefulness in a manly character, a beauty in an open and ingenuous disposition, which all the professed teachers of the arts of pleasing know not how to communicate.

Chest. You and I lived in a state of manners, as different as the periods at which we lived were distant. You Romans, pardon me, my dear, you Romans—had a little of the brute in you. Come, come, I must overlook it. You were obliged to court plebeians for their suffrages; and if *similis simili gaudet*, it must be owned, that the greatest of you were secure of their favour. Why, Beau Nash would have handed your Catos and Brutuses out of the ball-room, if they had shown their unmannerly heads in it; and my Lord Modish, animated with the conscious merit of the largest or smallest buckles in the room, according to the temporary ton, would have laughed Pompey the Great out of counte-

nance. Oh, Cicero, had you lived in a modern European court, you would have caught a degree of that undescribable grace, which is not only the ornament, but may be the substitute of all those laboured attainments which fools call solid merit. But it was not your good fortune, and I make allowances.

Cic. The vivacity you have acquired in studying the writings and the manners of the degenerate Gauls, has led you to set too high a value on qualifications which dazzle the lively perceptions with a momentary blaze, and to depreciate that kind of worth which can neither be obtained nor understood without serious attention and sometimes painful efforts. But I will not contend with you on the propriety or impropriety of the outward modes which delight fops and coxcombs. I will not spend arguments in proving that gold is more valuable than tinsel, though it glitters less. But I must censure you, and with an asperity too, which, perhaps, your graces may not approve, for recommending vice as graceful, in your memorable letters to your son.

Chest. That the great Cicero should know so little of the world, really surprises me. A little libertinism, my dear, that's all; how can one be a gentleman without a little libertinism?

Cic. I ever thought that to be a gentleman, it was requisite to be a moral man. And surely you, who might have enjoyed the benefit of a light to direct you, which I wanted, were blameable in omitting religion and virtue in your system.

Chest. What! superstitious too!—You have not then conversed with your superior, the philosopher of Ferney. I thank Heaven, I was born in the same age with that great luminary. Prejudice had else, perhaps, chained me in the thraldom of my great grandmother. These are enlightened days;

and I find I have contributed something to the general illumination, by my posthumous letters.

Cic. Boast not of them. Remember you were a father.

Chest. And did I not endeavour most effectually to serve my son, by pointing out the qualifications necessary to a foreign ambassador, for which department I always designed him? Few fathers have taken more pains to accomplish a son than myself. There was nothing I did not condescend to point out to him.

Cic. True: your condescension was great indeed. You were the pander of your son. You not only taught him the mean arts of dissimulation, the petty tricks which degrade nobility; but you corrupted his principles, fomented his passions, and even pointed out objects for their gratification. You might have left the task of teaching him fashionable vice to a vicious world. Example, and the corrupt affections of human nature, will ever be capable of accomplishing this unnatural purpose. But a parent, the guardian appointed by nature for an uninstructed offspring introduced into a dangerous world, who himself takes upon him the office of seduction, is a monster indeed. I also had a son. I was tenderly solicitous for the right conduct of his education. I intrusted him, indeed, to Cratippus at Athens; but, like you, I could not help transmitting instructions dictated by paternal love. Those instructions are contained in my book of Offices; a book which has ever been cited by the world as a proof to what a height the morality of the heathens was advanced without the light of revelation. I own I feel a conscious pride in it; not on account of the ability which it may display, but for the principles it teaches, and the good, I flatter myself, it has diffused. You did not, indeed, intend your in-

structions for the world; but as you gave them to a son you loved, it may be concluded that you thought them true wisdom, and withheld them only because they were contrary to the professions of the unenlightened. They have been generally read, and tend to introduce the manners, vices, and frivolous habits of the nation you admired—to your own manly nation, who, of all others, once approached most nearly to the noble simplicity of the Romans.

Chest. Spare me, Cicero. I have never been accustomed to the rough conversation of an old Roman. I feel myself little in his company. I seem to shrink in his noble presence. I never felt my insignificance so forcibly as now. French courtiers and French philosophers, of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, have been my models; and amid the dissipation of pleasure, and the hurry of affected vivacity, I never considered the gracefulness of virtue, and the beauty of an open, sincere, and manly character.*

NO. CLXII.—CONJECTURES ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORIENTAL AND SEPTENTRIONAL POETRY, OR THE POETRY OF THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES OF EUROPE.

The productions of the mind, like those of the earth, are found to have different degrees of vigour

* This Essay, like many others in these volumes, was occasioned by the great popularity of Chesterfield's Letters at the time it was written. They tended, in the author's opinion, to the destruction of the national morals, and particularly to the corruption of youth; for which reason they were attacked by him, in various modes, and with a zeal which, at least, was honest.

and beauty in different climates. In the more northern regions, where the nerves are braced by cold, those works are the commonest, and attain to the greatest perfection, which proceed from the exertion of the rational powers, and the painful efforts of the judgement. The sciences, like the hardy pine, flourish on the bleakest mountains; while the works of taste and fancy seem to shrink from the rude blast, with all the tenderness of the sensitive plant, and to require the genial warmth of a nearer sun to give them their full luxuriance and maturity. Aristotle, Newton, and Locke, were the natives and inhabitants of temperate regions. Experience, indeed, seems to prove, that all the mental powers exist in their greatest degree of strength and perfection among those who inhabit that part of the globe which lies between the tropic of Cancer and the Arctic circle. No complete and celebrated work of genius was ever produced in the torrid zone.

But whether the diversity of genius in countries near or remoter from the sun proceeds from natural causes, or from the adventitious circumstances of different modes of education, different views, and a different spirit of emulation, it is certain that the productions of Eastern and Northern genius are dissimilar. Some ingenious critics have indeed pointed out a resemblance between the Gothic and Oriental poetry, in the wild enthusiasm of an irregular imagination. And they have accounted for it, by supposing, with great probability, that in an emigration of the Asiatics into Scandinavia, the Eastern people brought with them their national spirit of poetry, and communicated it to the tribes with whom they united. The resemblance, therefore, in works produced since this union, does not prove that the Northern and Oriental genius were originally alike. Those productions of either which

are allowed to be original, and to bear no marks of imitation, have perhaps no other resemblance than that which commonly proceeds from the similar operation of similar faculties, independently of climate.

It seems, indeed, that a cause may be assigned for this diversity of Northern and Oriental productions, without attributing it to an essential difference in the original constitution of the human understanding. The imagination is strongly affected by surrounding objects, and acquires vigour by frequent exercise. He who is placed in a climate where the serenity of the weather constantly presents him with blue skies, luxuriant plantations, and sunny prospects, will find his imagination the strongest of his faculties; and, in the expression of his sentiments, will abound in allusions to natural objects, in similes, and the most lively metaphors. His imagination will be his distinguishing excellence, because it will be more exercised than any other of his faculties: and all the powers both of body and mind are known to acquire vigour by habitual exertion. He, on the other hand, whose lot it is to exist in a less favoured part of the globe, who is driven by the inclemency of his climate to warm roofs, and, instead of basking in the sunshine amidst all the combined beauties of nature, flies for refuge from the cold to the blazing hearth, will seek, in the exercise of his reason, those resources which he cannot find in the actual employment of his imagination. Good sense and just reasoning will therefore predominate in his productions. Even in the wildest of his flights, a methodical plan, the result of thought and reflection, will appear, on examination, to restrain the irregularities of licentious fancy.

Consistently with this theory we find Oriental po-

etry exhibiting the most picturesque scenes of nature, and illustrating every moral sentiment or argumentative assertion by similes, not indeed exact in the resemblance, but sufficiently analogous to strike and gratify the imagination. Strong imagery, animated sentiment, warmth and vivacity of expression, all of which are the effects of a lively fancy, are its constant characteristics. The accuracy of logic, and the subtilty of metaphysics, are of a nature too frigid to influence the Oriental writer. He feels not the beauty of demonstration, he pursues not a chain of argument, and he submits to the force of persuasion, rather from the dictates of his feelings than from rational conviction. He endeavours to influence his reader in the same manner, and commonly excites an emotion so violent, as to produce a more powerful effect on common minds, than would be experienced even from conclusive argumentation.

NO. CLXIII.—CURSORY REMARKS ON THE POETRY OF THE PROPHETS, OF ISAIAH IN PARTICULAR, AND ON THE BEAUTIES OF BIBLICAL POETRY IN GENERAL.

THE Sibylline oracles owed their solemn air, their credit, and their power over the fancy, to the dark and difficult style in which they were composed. Virgil's Pollio, supposed to have been written from a hint taken from the books of the Sibyls, is the most admired of his Eclogues; and a great share of the pleasure derived from the perusal of it, is justly attributed to the judgement of the poet, in leaving more to be understood than meets the ear. The forebodings of Cassandra were not attended to by the Trojans; and perhaps the true reason was, that

they were not completely understood. The witches in Macbeth add to the terrible solemnity of prophetical incantation, by its darkness and uncertainty.

Obscurity seems to have been the characteristic of all writings pretending to prediction. It certainly increased their poetical merit, though, among the Greeks and Romans, it was probably no more than a studied artifice to evade, if the event did not correspond with the prophecy, the imputation of imposture. Thus were the oracles of Apollo delivered in ambiguous phrases, which frequently admitted a contrary, and always a doubtful, interpretation.

Without this artful proceeding, the authority of the heathen religion had not been so long maintained. Frequent failure, without any subterfuge to preserve the prophetical power unsuspected, would soon have silenced the Delphic priestess. But while the ænigmatical prediction preserved the dignity of the oracle, by inspiring awe, it contributed to its security by facilitating evasion.

The Sacred Prophecies have that obscurity which distinguishes this species of writing. The final cause of it, however, was to exercise the faith and sagacity of mankind. The beauty which it adds to the poetry cannot be supposed to arise from design or skill in poetry as an art, but is the necessary result of natural propriety. And none but the unbeliever will suppose that, like the oracles at Delphi, they admitted a doubtful, in order to admit a double construction.

The prophecy of Isaiah abounds in the beauties of Oriental poetry. The translation in our Bible is a literal one, and, though it may be found inaccurate by a Lowth or a Kennicot, will, I believe, hardly admit of improvement in force, simplicity, and animation. It does honour to the feelings of the old translators, who, though they have per-

formed their task with so much spirit, had nothing else in view but fidelity. To refinement and taste they made no pretensions; and that their work is so well executed must have been owing to the excellence of their natural sentiment and taste. We have several literal translations of the ancient poets into English prose, which are in request among school-boys. In these we find no remains of that beauty which has been celebrated in every age from its first production. Few of these are rendered so faithfully, word for word, from their originals, as the Scriptures, which, notwithstanding this disadvantage, are the sublimest and most interesting books in the English language.

That they are thus excellent, it may indeed be said, is not to be wondered at. They proceeded from that real inspiration to which the celebrated writers of antiquity only pretended. And if the enthusiasm, which the imaginary assistance of a fabulous deity excited, could diffuse that captivating spirit over the works of a mortal poet which has charmed every succeeding age, it will be an obvious inference, that the genuine afflatus of the great Author of the universe must produce a work of eminent and unquestionable beauty. Such reasoning is plausible; but, in the present case, it may not be improper to observe, that the divine inspiration operated intentionally no farther than in dictating truth of representation, and in laying open scenes of futurity; and that the beauties discoverable in the medium of composition by which those primary ends are accomplished, are effects but collateral and subordinate. Considered as such, every man of sentiment feels them of a superior kind, and if he judges by the criterion of his undissembled feelings, must acknowledge, that though they are sometimes resembled in Homer, they are seldom equalled and

never excelled. Take a view of the poetical beauties merely as the productions of Isaiah, a very ancient poet of Judæa, and his writings will surely claim the attention of a man of letters, as much as those of the native of Smyrna or of Ascra.

They who pretend to an exemption from prejudice, evince the futility of their pretensions, when they attribute the general admiration of the Scriptures, as compositions, to opinions formed in their favour in the earlier period of infancy. The truth is, the prejudices which they have unreasonably adopted against the doctrines derived from those ancient books extend themselves to the style and sentiment: but surely, exclusively of the religious tendency, and of the arguments for the authenticity of the books, they claim a great degree of veneration from their antiquity, and justly excite the attention of criticism, as curious specimens of Oriental composition.

It might, indeed, have been expected, from the general taste, which at present prevails for the remains of ancient English poetry, that those works, which justly boast a higher antiquity than any of the productions of North or South Britain, would have been particularly regarded. But, while the ballad of a minstrel, beautiful perhaps, and well worth preserving, has been recovered from its dust and committed to memory, the family Bible has been suffered to lie unopened, or has been perused by many only with a view to painful improvement, without an idea of the possibility of deriving from it the elegant pleasures of literary entertainment.

Yet even the vulgar sensibly feel the force of beauties which they know not how to point out; and are affected with a very strong sense of pleasure, while they are reading the Scriptures solely from motives of duty, and a desire of edification. In

truth, among those whose natural taste is not corrupted by false refinement, which perhaps is the most numerous, though not the most distinguished part of the community, the Bible is read as affording all the delight of pleasing poetry and history; and it may, therefore, justly be called the most popular book in the English language.

But all readers, whether vulgar or refined, who feel and acknowledge the admirable touches of nature and simplicity which are observable in many parts of those writings, will perhaps receive additional satisfaction, when they discover that their taste is often conformable to classical ideas of literary excellence.

There is, in the present age, a very numerous tribe of readers, who have formed their taste and sentiments from the writings of the philosophers on the continent, and from the sceptical sophistry of our own countrymen. They are known to make pretensions to a very uncommon degree of refinement in their judgement of composition, and to condemn every work, whatever marks it may bear of a strong though uncultivated genius, which wants the last polish of delicacy and correctness, and has nothing similar to those modern productions, with which alone they have been conversant. With all their boasted comprehension of mind, they seem to want ideas, which may operate as principles in forming a just opinion of those works which were composed before the invention of systematic rules, and before native sentiment was superseded by the feeble, though elegant, feelings, of which we boast in a very advanced state of civilization. Under these unfavourable prepossessions, the Bible appears to them as an assemblage of grossness and vulgarisms, which, therefore, without determining upon the authenticity of it, they avoid reading, apprehending

that they can derive no pleasure from it, and that they may possibly corrupt their style, and catch inelegance.

With these it would be a valuable point gained, for their own sakes as well as for society, if they could be prevailed on so far to lay aside their prejudices as to open the book and judge of it from what they feel and remark on a fair examination. If they could once be induced to read it with avidity, from an expectation of literary amusement, they could scarcely fail of receiving at the same time a more important benefit.

In an age like the present, when all orders are, in some degree, attached to letters, he certainly renders great service to religion, and consequently to society, who unites taste with theology, and excites the attention of the careless and sceptical to those books, of which a sense of duty enjoins the perusal, by setting their beauties in a new or a stronger light.

And that this opinion of the peculiar beauties of Isaiah is not singular, if it is necessary to appeal to any other proof than the common feelings of mankind, is evident from the judgement of a popular writer of our own, who, as he was indisputably a poet himself, will be allowed, by the most rigid critics, to be a competent judge of poetry. Mr. Pope's Messiah is one of the best known and most esteemed of his shorter works; but that it derived its chief merit from Isaiah there can be no doubt, and the admirable poet felt a pleasure to acknowledge. He neglected not the opportunity which this pastoral afforded, of forming a comparison between Isaiah and Virgil, in a few parallel passages, fairly displayed by a translation equally literal, and to exhibit the Oriental poet to great advantage. Of this animated prophet's poetry, there are many parodies, para-

phrases, and imitations, all which, at the same time that they evince how difficult his excellencies are to be equalled, are proofs that he has been generally admired as a poet.

But, after all, the reader must judge of the sacred writings for himself. If he attends to what he feels, and lays aside prepossession, his judgement will be favourable and just. To remove a single prejudice, which can prevent the universal acceptance of books of universal concern, is to contribute greatly to the general happiness. An attempt to render the prophetic writers objects of particular attention, in an age when our most ingenious theologists are employed in illustrating their meaning at a lecture wisely established for that purpose, must, at least, have the merit of being well-timed.

And surely every one who wishes to promote the desirable coalition of taste with piety, must accept, with gratitude, the labours of Lowth, whose lectures on the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, and observations on Isaiah, have displayed, in biblical literature, the unexpected charms of classic elegance.

NO. CLXIV.—ON PREACHING, AND SERMON-WRITERS.

Few institutions can contribute more to preserve civilization, and promote moral and intellectual improvement among all ranks of people, than the establishment of public lectures in every part of the kingdom, to be periodically repeated after a short interval.

Such is the light in which are to be considered the discourses appointed by the wisdom of the church, to be every where read on the recurrence of the seventh day. By these the meanest and the

most illiterate are enabled to hear moral and philosophical treatises on every thing that concerns their several duties, without expense, and without the trouble of solicitation.

And whatever is urged by men who are ill-affected to all religious institutions, there is no doubt but that great political, as well as moral, benefit is derived to society from a practice thus universal. But it is a misfortune long ago lamented, that men are incapable of estimating the real value of advantages, till experience has shown what it is to want them.

It is certainly true, that since the acquisition of books has been facilitated by their numbers, oral instruction is rendered less necessary. But though books are easily procured, yet, even in this age of information, there are thousands in the lower classes who cannot read at all, or at least with much advantage. Besides, it is a well-known truth, that the same precepts inculcated by a living instructor, adorned by a proper oratory, and enforced by a serious and authoritative manner, produce a powerful effect, not to be experienced in solitary retirement. There is likewise a sympathy communicated in a numerous audience, which attaches the mind more strongly to the subject.

The obvious utility of discourses from the pulpit is proved by the decisions of experience. For, notwithstanding the complaints against the levity and profaneness of the age, churches are still frequented with apparent pleasure. And to be placed in a situation where a good preacher resides, is by many esteemed a very essential requisite to an agreeable retreat from the cares and business of life.

For excellent preachers this nation has been long distinguished; excellent, not so much in the talents of an orator, as in the composition of discourses.

With an uncultivated voice, in an uncouth manner, accompanied with awkward attitudes, they have delivered harangues scarcely excelled in the schools of Athens. As the French have exhibited their characteristic levity even in their boasted sermons, so the English have displayed their natural solidity.

The sermons of the last century are indeed too long for the attention of modern indolence, but they abound with beauty that would reward it. Jeremy Taylor possessed an invention profusely fertile; a warm, rich, lively imagination; a profound knowledge of authors sacred and profane, poetical, historical, philosophical. He has embellished his sermons with citations from them, and has interwoven their gold into the rich tissue of his own composition.

Nearly at the same time with Taylor arose Isaac Barrow, a mighty genius, whose ardour was capable of accomplishing all it undertook. The tide of his eloquence flows with smooth yet irresistible rapidity. He treats his subject with almost mathematical precision, and never leaves it till he has exhausted it. It has been said, that a late most popular orator of the House of Lords asserted, that he owed much of the fire and rapidity of his eloquence to the study of Barrow.

His editor, Tillotson, is more popular. His merit is unquestionably great, and his fame has been extended to very exalted heights by the praises of Addison. He writes with sufficient judgement and perspicuity; but there are those, among whom I am one, who venture to suggest that he has been too much celebrated as a model of fine composition. They allow him every praise as a most excellent divine; but when they consider him as a writer, they think his periods might have been shorter, and his

rhythm more harmonious. They are often wearied with dulness, and disgusted with coarseness and inelegance.

Archbishop Sharpe has been justly celebrated for the force, the purity, the perspicuity of his style, and the ardent flow of unaffected piety.

Of a very different character from these, South has obtained a great and deserved reputation. Wit was his talent, yet he often reaches sublimity. He is, however, one of those authors who, in some respects, is to be admired and not imitated. To excite a laugh from the pulpit, is to inspire the hearer with a levity of temper ill-adapted to the indulgence of devotional feelings. The taste of the age in which South flourished gave countenance to pulpit jocularity. But though it is true that the lovers of comedy have found their taste gratified in the perusal of South's sermons, yet the man of the most serious mind also will discover much solid argument, many most judicious observations, many fine expressions, and a great deal of true eloquence, intermixed occasionally with a few epigrams in prose.

The sagacious Samuel Clarke pretended not to wit. He affected not the ambitious ornaments of rhetoric. He rarely reaches the sublime, or aims at the pathetic; but in a clear, manly, flowing style, he delivers the most important doctrines, confirmed on every occasion by well-applied passages from Scripture. If he was not a shining orator, according to the ideas of rhetoricians, he was a very agreeable, as well as useful, convincing, powerful preacher. He was not perfectly orthodox in his opinions; a circumstance which has lowered his character among many. Certain it is, that he would have done more good in the world, had he confined his labours to practical divinity. Speculative and polemical divinity commonly diffuses scepticism and acrimony,

without contributing much to moral and religious reformation.

The sermons that have been preached at Boyle's Lectures are among the best argued in the language. They were the laboured productions of the most ingenious men. But perhaps the whole collection never did so much good among the mass of the people as a single practical discourse of Barrow.

Bishop Atterbury was a polite writer. His sermons probably owed some of their fame, among his contemporaries, who have lavishly applauded him, to his mode of delivery in the pulpit; for the Tatler says it was such as would have been approved by a Longinus and Demosthenes. I cannot profess any great admiration either of the man or the preacher. He seems to have introduced the very judicious method of addressing the understanding in the beginning of the sermon, and the passions at the close. It was, however, a rule of ancient rhetoric.

Rogers possessed an eloquence, nervous, simple, persuasive, and beautiful. An unstudied elegance marks his style. He seems to have attained to that nice judgement, which adapted the same discourse to a rustic, a city, and academical congregation. In a professed eulogium it is indeed allowable to exaggerate; yet what Burton, his professed panegyrist, has advanced is confirmed by perusing the sermons of Rogers. They are perspicuous, solid, and written with remarkable ease. They are among the best in the language.

Seed has obtained a great and deserved popularity. With a rich and sportive fancy he combined a solid judgement. Unlike the generality of those writers who affect to be flowery, he abounds in fruit also, in sound argument, and in just remarks on human life. A severe critic would condemn him for

a profusion of embellishment; but, I know not how it is, he had the skill to apply abundance of ornament without causing satiety.

Such are the more popular of our English sermon-writers, the models of those many divines who, with very great merit, possess not the reputation of remarkable originality. To enumerate them all were an endless task; for of no books in the English language has there been so unceasing a succession as of sermons; and to speak of living writers with freedom, is too often like thrusting a hand into the nest of the hornet, especially since journals have degenerated so much as to have become mere instruments of political party.

Of late there have appeared publications of sermons addressed to persons of particular ages or descriptions. Though some of them exhibited a highly florid eloquence, and were received with great applause, yet they were too much ornamented, and, like many kinds of food, possessed a sweetness which delights for a moment, but soon terminates in loathing. They amused the imagination, and sometimes touched the heart; but they left to the understanding little employment. Perhaps the sermons of Fordyce are of this description.

Sermons which came forth with less eclat, will stand a better chance of descending to posterity. Such are those of Sherlock, Secker, and Jortin. The happiness of mankind is concerned in the preservation of works such as theirs, while those of the frothy declaimer are daily dropping unregretted into the gulf of oblivion.

It is to be lamented, that the glaring and meretricious embellishments of the superficial writer are more commonly imitated by young preachers, than the chaster beauties of the sound divine. Fine language, as it is called, with a few hackneyed senti-

ments and addresses to the passions, often constitute the whole merit of discourses preached before the most numerous congregations in the metropolis, especially, it is said, in the chapels of fashion.

Extemporary preaching is one of the most effectual means of obtaining popularity. It always pleases the vulgar: probably because it conveys the idea of immediate inspiration. It is true also, that by pleasing the vulgar, it is enabled to affect them. But yet there are many reasons to prevent its general reception among the judicious. It may raise the passions, it may communicate a momentary fit of devotion; but from its hasty production it can seldom be correct or solid. It is, indeed, seldom attempted but by the bold and superficial. The greatest divines have not been presumptuous enough to lay before their audience the effusions of the moment, but have usually bestowed much time and care in the composition of a single sermon. We are indeed informed that Clarke sometimes preached without written notes; but the number of his printed sermons is a proof that this was not his general practice. They who possess the abilities of a Clarke may, however, safely venture to produce an unpremeditated harangue. But they also would do right to recollect, that the orations even of Demosthenes himself smelled of the lamp, and that the mushroom is of quick growth, while the fruit and the forest tree require time to become valuable.

Against those who prepare their discourses, a general complaint has been made, that sermons are become in these days merely moral essays. There was a time when a passáge from Scripture, well introduced, was esteemed a flower far surpassing every ornament of rhetoric. It is now sometimes avoided as an ugly patch, that chequers with deformity the glossy but flimsy contexture.

A professed Christian preacher, addressing a professed Christian audience, should remember, that, however beautiful his discourse, if it is no more than a moral discourse, he may preach it, and they may hear it, and yet both continue unconverted heathens. Morality should always be taught under the sanction of Christianity.

Every congregation of real Christians wishes to find all morality deduced from Scripture, and confirmed by it. Moral precepts, thus adorned, come from the pulpit as from an oracle. Scriptural language is not inelegant: but if it were, a preacher should let motives of duty exclude ostentation. In truth, he never appears to greater advantage, than when he seems to forget his own excellence, and to lose sight of himself in the earnestness of his endeavours to promote the welfare of his audience, whose souls, according to the language of our church, are committed to his care.

NO. CLXV.—ON THE NEGLECT OF ANCIENT AUTHORS. [IN A LETTER.]

Though it be true, as you remark, that in the present times learning is universally admired, and the character of a man of taste and letters is affected not only in colleges, but in polite circles; not only by the philosopher, but by the beau and the coxcomb; yet is it to be lamented, that there seems to remain no general relish for solid erudition, very little veneration for the inimitable productions of Greece and Rome, and but a slight attention to the more abstruse sciences and abstracted disquisitions. We read for pleasure, for amusement, for mere pastime, which dry argument and connected reasoning can-

not always furnish. Light, airy, superficial compositions, without fatiguing the intellect, flatter the imagination; and for the sake of this empty satisfaction, to this trivial kind of reading is our time devoted, without regard to improvement of morals, or enlargement of understanding. Local, personal, and temporary topics, attract and engross the attention of multitudes.

From neglecting the writers of antiquity, we become ignorant of their beauties, vainly suppose that excellence is confined to modern authors, and that the ancients can be admired only by prejudice and bigotry. Even they who are really sensible of the excellence of the classics, are willing, because they have neglected the study of them, to depreciate their merits, and to extenuate the infamy of their ignorance, by pretending that the knowledge of them is not desirable. Some there are who, though they profess an admiration of the ancients, read them not in the originals, because they think it possible, without the trouble of loading their memories with dead languages, to taste all their beauties through the medium of translations.

To those who affirm that an admiration of the ancients is founded on prejudice, it is sufficient to reply, that the unanimous applause of whole nations, for many ages, cannot, with the appearance of reason, be attributed to implicit attachment or ignorant wonder, or, in a word, to prejudice.

As for those who condemn the Greek and Latin authors because they will not take the pains to understand them, they are to be censured for their indolence, and despised for their artifice: and they who read a Horace or a Virgil, in an English translation, however well performed, must be told, that they will form no better idea of the inexpressible graces of these poets, than they would receive of

the masterpieces of a Raphael or a Guido, from the daubing of a mere copyist. In the transfusion from one language to another, as it has been frequently remarked, the spirit evaporates, and seldom any thing remains but a *caput mortuum.*

The matter of an ancient and original may be preserved, the ideas justly exhibited, the historical part accurately represented; but the manner, the style, the beauties of diction, which constitute more than half the excellence of the classics, can seldom be transferred to a modern language. They who read translations only, are like those who view the figures of a beautiful piece of tapestry on the wrong side.

I must then earnestly recommend it to you, if you wish to taste the genuine sweets of the classic streams, to drink at the fountain, and be not so weak as to believe those who tell you authoritatively, that the learning which they have the misfortune not to possess, is of no value. They really are not, and cannot possibly be, competent judges in this matter. The question when before them is *Coram non judice.*

NO. CLXVI.—ON THE RETIREMENT OF A COUNTRY TOWN. [IN A LETTER.]

Romæ rus optas, absentem rusticus urbem
Tollis ad astra. HOR.

SIR,

My father had a lucrative place in the customs; but as his family was large, he was unable to leave us fortunes, and contented himself with placing us in such situations in the world as would give us an opportunity of acquiring a decent provision, if we should not be wanting to ourselves. It was my lot,

after having received a tincture of classical education, to be put apprentice to a genteel business at the west end of the town. As soon as I was out of my time, I set up for myself; and though I cannot boast that I ever was in a very great way, yet, by attention and frugality, I had accumulated, at the age of forty, a sum sufficient to enable me to live in a comfortable manner, without the anxiety and confinement of trade. A handsome legacy from a relation of my wife, at once determined me, in my long-meditated intention, to sell off at prime cost, and retire.

I had always entertained a great idea of the happiness of living in the country. It was, indeed, natural in one who had dwelt near forty years in a dusty warehouse, amidst the dirt, smoke, and noise of Houndsditch; and who seldom make an excursion beyond the cake-house at Hoxton, or the bowling-green at Hackney.

One morning, while I was revolving in my mind the idea of retirement, I happened to cast my eye on an advertisement in the news-paper, in which a house, garden, and grounds, in a market-town, about five and thirty miles from London, were announced to be let at fifty pounds a-year. This appeared to me too advantageous a bargain to be neglected; for, you must know, I gave a hundred a year for my shop, the area of which was no more than three yards by four; and here were twenty acres of land, and a mansion that would contain my house ten times over, to be let for half the money. There was no time to be lost: I shut up shop, took my wife and family down, and settled immediately.

As I did not go into the country on an œconomical plan, I was resolved to launch out a little, and live, as I could very well afford it, in a moderately genteel style. I set up a post-chaise, kept several

horses, and two livery-servants. This appearance placed me on a level with the best families in the neighbourhood, and accordingly I was visited by all who claimed the rank of gentlefolks.

But, alas! I found not in this place that happiness which I expected. I have been convinced by experience, that a market-town is not a proper situation for the retirement of those who wish to taste the pleasures of rural life, and to pass the evening of their days in a state of tranquillity. That you may judge of the impropriety of such a retreat, I shall give you an account of my reception in it, and of several circumstances, which render it less fit for the enjoyment of those peaceful and domestic pleasures, which every one who retires from business expects, than the noisiest street in the metropolis of the empire.

The first visits were paid us from motives of curiosity, under the pretence of politeness. Our persons, our address, our characters, were examined with all the severity of criticism, but without the candour of benevolence. The various remarks that were made, furnished, with improvements and embellishments, an inexhaustible fund of conversation for the next three months.

With respect to myself, at the first weekly club after our arrival, the 'squire, the attorney, the apothecary, and two or three gentlemen sots who lived upon their means, as it is called, sat in judgement upon my character. After much debate, in which an equal portion of candour and discernment were displayed, I was found guilty of being a cockney, of keeping a poor table, and yet, at the same time, living above my fortune; and lastly, of having a great deal of pride that little became me. The result was, that though they should condescend to call upon me, as long as my pipe of excellent port

lasted, yet I was not to be admitted a member of their jolly society, being a Londoner.

It is true, I visit and am visited; but as I really do not take much pleasure in a drinking-bout; as I am not very well skilled in farming or fox-hunting; and, from a tenderness of constitution, am obliged to be abstemious in the articles of eating and drinking, we commonly have more form in our meetings than cordiality. To assemble together for the sake of liberal and manly conversation, is held insipid. My sons are never at home; and my daughters, who have been taught to set a high value on mental accomplishments, neither give nor receive much satisfaction in the company of those who think it the very summit of education, to have learned, at a boarding-school, to dance and play a minuet.

The envy, the jealousy, and the impertinence of the lower sort of people is not less conspicuous and troublesome than that of their superiors. If we send to buy any thing, we are forced to pay something more than any body else, because we are the rich new-comers. If my cow happens to break into neighbour Hodge's field, she is pounded without notice, because, forsooth, she is the Londoner's cow. If we walk down the town, all the doors and windows are flung open, and crowded with spectators, just as it is in London at my lord-mayor's show. My poor wife and daughters' dress are criticised and pulled to pieces with unrelenting severity.

Whenever my servants go to any shop, a set of gossips make a point of meeting them, in order to ask what I had for dinner, how much small-beer is consumed by us in a week, and a thousand similar questions. No little art is made use of to persuade them that I am stingy, and that my place is the worst in the town; though to my certain knowledge, I am so far imposed upon, being a stranger, as that I am

forced to pay a third more wages than any body else in the neighbourhood.

Nothing passes in my house which does not become matter of general conversation. If a cousin or an old acquaintance comes from London to spend a few days with me, no pains are spared to learn of the servants who and what he is; and if my servants know nothing about him, it is suggested that he is in some low trade, a mere mechanic in his best suit of clothes. If he should take an evening walk with my daughters, unaccompanied with me or my wife, he is going to be married to one of them directly. His name, his age, his origin, are immediately divulged; the fortunes on both sides ascertained, and the day fixed.

I can never buy nor sell a horse, a cow, or a pig, nor change a servant, but I am called behind my back a fool for my pains, and it is hinted that I do not know what I am about; and indeed, how should I, since I am a cit? If I make an alteration in my garden, dig a ditch, mend a pig-stye, or thatch a hovel, my taste, my judgement, my prudence, are called in question, and it is charitably wished that I do not bring my noble to nine-pence, and my nine-pence to nothing. In short, hardly a mouse can stir in any part of the house, from the parlour to the scullery, but the barber, the chandler's-shop keeper, the landlady at the ale-house, the mantua-maker, and the char-woman, find means to get a knowledge of it, for the entertainment of their customers and employers.

Till I lived in this place, I never thought myself of such consequence as to merit general attention. In London, my next-door neighbour neither knew nor cared what passed in my parlour and kitchen. I can, however, easily account for this difference. In a market-town, of no great opulence or extent,

there are not objects enough to divert the idle; no plays, no auctions, no fine shops, no show-glasses. Scarcely any amusements for sots, gossips, and old maids, but thinking and talking on the affairs and families of other people. The settlement of a stranger in their town is food to them for years. They have been too long used to the natives to find any novelty in their concerns, and perhaps have been induced to regard them with that partiality of long acquaintance or of relationship which precludes malevolence. But strangers are lawful game; and the cruelty of little minds is found to take a pleasure in detracting from their characters, and defeating, by false and malignant representations, those schemes of happiness with which they flattered themselves in retirement.

Sick of such impertinence, and disgusted with the ill-nature of all around me, I have resolved to quit the market-town, and have just hired a house delightfully situated in a distant village. It is the paternal habitation of a man, who, having hopes of rising at court, chooses to leave his charming retreat, for a small dark house in one of the dismal lanes that lead into the Strand. I shall have no near neighbours, but the vicar, who is not only a learned, virtuous, religious, and benevolent, but also an agreeable man. His family, all of whom have that elegance of mind which results from a taste for letters, will be much with mine. They have already formed a reciprocal attachment. And I hope to have found at last, in this place, that happiness which I vainly sought in a more frequented situation. Of this I am confident, that the honest simplicity of the rustics, if it is not agreeable, is far less disgusting, than the pert, affected, ill-natured airs and manners of the little half-bred gentry in little country-towns.

The beauties of nature untouched by art, an air sweet as it blows over the blossomed vale, peaceful hours, social cheerfulness, domestic joys, rural dignity—these are mine in my village retreat. Nor do I regret the loss of formal visits, and that wretched intercourse with little and unemployed minds, which, while it wore away life in insipidity, exposed me to the envenomed shafts of unmerited calumny.

NO. CLXVII.—CURSORY THOUGHTS ON EPISTOLARY WRITERS.

WHEN a writer has distinguished himself in his studied performances, and pleased us in those works which he intended for our perusal, we become interested in all that concerns him, and wish to be acquainted with his ideas, as they flowed without any view to their publication, in the open communications of a private and friendly correspondence. Beautiful minds, like beautiful bodies, appear graceful in an undress. The awe which they inspire, when surrounded with all their dignity, is sometimes more striking than pleasing; but we feel ourselves relieved when admitted to their familiarity. We love to retire behind the scenes, and to observe the undisguised appearance of those who please us when industriously decorated for public exhibition. From this cause it has arisen, that the private letters of great men have been always read with peculiar avidity.

The Greeks, remarkable as they were for diversity of composition, have not left many models in the epistolary style. There is no doubt but that Xenophon excelled in it, though most of the letters which he wrote have either not been collected or

preserved. Those of Socrates, Antisthenes, Aristippus, Xenophon, Æschines, and Philo, have never been popular. Those which pass under the name of Aristænetus are of a taste less resembling the Attic than the Oriental. The descriptions in them are poetically luxuriant, but the language is not pure, nor the style simple.

The epistles of Phalaris have been much read by the learned; but though, if genuine, they are curious monuments of the genius of the tyrant, they are not very good specimens of epistolary composition. They are better known from the violent dispute they occasioned between Bentley and Boyle, than from their intrinsic merit. In some part of that famous controversy, Bentley says, with his usual acrimony, that Boyle, who had published an edition of Phalaris, had made a bad book worse by a bad edition of it.

Cicero, the world's great model in the oratorical and philosophical, is no less eminent in the epistolary style. He rivalled his great patterns the Greeks in eloquence and philosophy; and he excelled them in his letters. His letters have a grace peculiar to themselves. Many of his other works are professedly imitations, but conducted with that art which characterises genius, and appropriates all it handles. His letters were not studied, they were the effusions of the moment, they arose from the occasion, and please from their air of truth and unaffected propriety. Whether business, pleasure, politics, philosophy, or conjugal and paternal affection are their subjects, they are equally excellent and always pleasing. He wrote them without the least view of their coming to the public eye, and to this circumstance they owe a great share of their merit, their freedom from affectation. Near a thousand of them remain, and furnish abundance of historical information, at

the same time that they exhibit the best models for this species of writing. They are thought not to appear to the best advantage in the specimens which Dr. Middleton has inserted in his Life of Cicero. No one was better able to do them justice than that great biographer; but it is said he committed the task of translation to some inferior writer.

There was an age when the letters of Pliny were preferred to those of Cicero. They have, indeed, the glitter of an artificial polish, but they want the more captivating grace of natural beauty. They were studied, and they exhibit the appearance of study. He who delights in elaborate and highly finished composition, will be gratified in the perusal of Pliny; but he will at the same time regret, if he has a taste for propriety, that this labour was not bestowed where it would have been better placed. In a philosophical discourse, or a formal harangue, we expect the interposition of art; but, in an epistle, we are more pleased with the genuine effusions of nature, than with the efforts of ingenuity.

Seneca's moral essays have little right to the name of Epistles, with which he distinguished them. They are little more than a collection of common-place observations abounding in wit and ingenious turns, but not abounding in elegance and grace. His faults, indeed, are sweet, as Quintilian said; but it is a sweetness which cloys, and can scarcely please any but a vitiated appetite.

After the Latin had ceased to be a living language, many excellent books of letters were written in it. It was the universal language of learning. The literati of different nations, the rude languages of which would not repay the labour of cultivation, wisely chose to communicate their thoughts as well as they could in the pure dialect of the court of Augustus. Some of the earliest of these are disgraced

by the barbarism of the times. But Petrarch shines amidst the surrounding obscurity. True genius like his, was sure to display its lustre, though it laboured under the disadvantage of a prevailing corruption of taste. His language, however, is by no means a model, and his style is barbarous.

Politian had just pretensions to true genius. There is a warmth and a vigour in his poetry, which fully proves him to have possessed the *mens divinior.* His epistles are elegant, but, like those of Pliny, whom he imitated, they are formal and affected. Upon the whole, they are not unpleasing, and abound with beautiful language.

Erasmus, a name that shines forth with peculiar glory in the annals of literature, justly possesses the first rank among the modern epistolary writers. His style, indeed, is not purely Ciceronian, though it displays many of its graces. It is entirely his own, yet it often rises to a level with classical excellence. He was not so scrupulously exact in his taste, as to reject a barbarous and Gothic expression, if it conveyed his ideas precisely. But he had the skill to use it with such propriety, that it acquired, in his writings, a grace and dignity. No man was better acquainted with the works of Cicero, and no man, after his emancipation from a few prejudices formed in his youth, entertained a higher opinion of Cicero's beauties, or knew better how to imitate them. But he despised the sect of Ciceronians, who would scarcely admit a particle that was not to be found in their favourite author. He ridiculed them with admirable wit and eloquence, in his dialogue Ciceronianus; nor would he give countenance, by any of his writings, to so ridiculous an affectation. More studious of copiousness and variety of matter, than of scrupulously imitating any model, he selects the most expressive word he can find in the language, and, by a judicious composition, renders it agree-

able and proper. With all their defects in point of purity of language, his letters are uncommonly entertaining; and have that spirit which genius can always display, but which laborious dulness vainly imitates. There is a fund of Lucianic humour in all his more familiar writings; in his colloquies it is most conspicuous; but it is also very remarkable in many of his epistles. Had he lived in an age when polite learning was more generally encouraged and cultivated, his productions would have been models of elegance, not inferior to the boasted reliques of antiquity. But, unfortunately, he was engaged in the unpleasing disputes of pedantic theologists; and, instead of treading the flowery paths of Greek and Roman literature, for which he was adapted by nature, was contented to toil through the thorny mazes of a barbarous, perplexed, and irrational system of divinity. His liberal mind soon perceived, and as soon avowed, the absurdity of the received modes and opinions; but he had too great a veneration for genuine Christianity, to neglect those studies which his profession, as a Christian and an ecclesiastic, naturally led him to cultivate. He saw, and in great measure avoided, the inelegancies which abounded in the theological writings of his times; but it was not easy always to be upon his guard against them: and his mind retained the tincture, as waters are polluted with the impurities through which they flow.

I omit a great number of epistolary writers, who had little merit of their own, and who derived all their fame from a servile imitation of Cicero. Among these is Paulus Manutius, who is said to have often spent a month in writing a single letter. We see in him, in consequence of this scrupulous attention, an elegant and truly Ciceronian phraseology; but we

observe none of the native graces of natural and unaffected composition.

Our neighbours, the French, have arrogated great merit as epistolary writers. Their genius and their language appear to be well adapted to excel in it. But some of the most celebrated writers have renounced the advantages which nature gave them, and spoiled all the beauties of sentiment and vivacity, by an unseasonable profusion of wit. Balzac wearies his reader with the constant recurrence of laboured ingenuity.

Voiture abounds with beautiful thoughts, expressed with great elegance. The language of compliment disgusts, in other writers, by its unmeaning sameness and formality. He has given it the grace of delicacy. But even he, though indisputably a fine writer, is justly censured by Bohours, for thoughts which the critic calls false and affected. Like many others, he has neglected real beauties for artificial ornaments.

Our own countrymen have honourably distinguished themselves in this, as well as in every other kind of elegant composition. The epistolary style of Swift is thought, by many, to excel all others. It has purity, ease, expression, and force. Pope's letters are lively and delicate. Shenstone's are much read; but it may be doubted whether they have that peculiar and striking excellence which should place them among the classics of our country.

The late lord Chesterfield, though justly decried as a moral instructor, is admired as a letter-writer of peculiar elegance. No man more closely and successfully imitated the French in every circumstance. Like them, he writes with perspicuity, vivacity, and that gracefulness which is sure to please, and which he so strenuously recommends. He is

himself, in this instance, a proof of the efficacy of the graces; for, with all his merit, he was certainly superficial, and yet obtained a degree of fame which more solid writers have seldom possessed. Lady Wortley Montague, Cowper, and many recent letter-writers, have shown an excellence in epistolary composition scarcely excelled by Cicero and Pliny.

Much has been said on the epistolary style; as if any one style could be appropriated to the great variety of subjects which are treated of in letters. Ease, it is true, should distinguish familiar letters, written on the common affairs of life; because the mind is usually at ease while they are composed. But, even in these, there incidently arises a topic which requires elevated expression, and an inverted construction. Not to raise the style on these occasions, is to write unnaturally; for nature teaches us to express animated emotions of every kind in animated language.

The impassioned lover writes unnaturally, if he writes with the ease of Sevigné. The dependant writes unnaturally to a superior, in the style of familiarity. The suppliant writes unnaturally, if he rejects the figures dictated by distress. Conversation admits of every style but the poetic, and what are letters but written conversation? The great rule is, to follow nature, and to avoid a stiff, formal, and affected manner both in sentiment and expression.

NO. CLXVIII.—ON THE NECESSITY OF EXERCISE, AMUSEMENTS, AND AN ATTENTION TO HEALTH, IN A LIFE OF STUDY. [IN A LETTER.]

I HAPPENED accidentally to meet a fellow-collegian, with whom, before we were separated by the ca-

price of fortune, I was intimately acquainted. Surely it is he, said I; but, alas, how changed! pale, emaciated, with hollow and lack-lustre eye, is this my old school-fellow, whose ruddy cheeks and cheerful countenance displayed health and happiness? What can have reduced my poor friend to so wretched a condition? Intemperance, or some dreadful disease, must have stolen away his youth, and hurried him to a premature old age.

While I was thus reflecting, he passed me without taking notice. He, indeed, seemed to be so entirely wrapped up in contemplation as to pay no regard to external objects. My curiosity and friendship were too much interested, to suffer him to leave me without giving some account of himself. I soon overtook him, and he no sooner recognized me, and perceived my surprise at his appearance, than he proceeded to assign the causes of it.

"You know, my friend," said he, "my first and strongest passion was for literary fame. Flattered by my friends, and encouraged at my school, I persuaded myself I was advancing in the career of glory; and, with all the ardour of enthusiasm, devoted every moment of my life to the pursuit of learning. Puerile diversions had no charms for me. A book was my sole delight, my constant companion, and was never laid aside but while my mind was employed in composition. During my residence at the university, I spent the time which my companions allotted to rural amusements, in examining those repositories of ancient learning, the public libraries. I saw, indeed, the futility of scholastic logic, but a desire to qualify myself for the public exercises, led me to the attentive perusal of Wallis and Saunderson. The same motive engaged me in dreary subtleties of metaphysics. Such studies engrossed the greater part of my first three years,

with little advantage, and no pleasure. The fatigue would have been intolerable had it not sometimes been alleviated by the charms of poetry. My favourite Virgil and Horace, and every polite writer of modern times, afforded, in their turn, an agreeable recreation. My exercises were honourably distinguished; and praise to an ingenuous mind is the best reward of learned labours.

"With my character for application and sobriety (not to boast of my attainments) I found no difficulty in obtaining orders. The head of my house procured me a curacy in a small country town. Thither I went, not without my collection of books, the use of which I would not have foregone for a mitre. I had no other wish than to improve myself in learning, and to perform the duty of an ecclesiastic with decency and devotion. I was happy in the prospect of spending my time uninterrupted by the intrusion of my academical friends, whom youth and high spirits would often lead to a noisy behaviour, little consistent with meditation. My want of experience concealed from me the difficulty of pursuing the line of conduct which inclination pointed out. I found it was necessary to my good reception among my parishioners, to give up the greatest part of the day to a participation in their amusements. In vain was it that I laboured to excel in the pulpit. There was not a man in the place who had an idea of the dignity or utility of literary excellence, and who would not most cordially have hated even a Clarke or a Tillotson, if he had never been in at the death of a hare, or drank his bottle at the club. The parson, in their idea of his character, was a jolly fellow in black, who was to lead a careless life all the week, and preach against it on Sundays. I could not bring myself to take a delight in a fox-chase; and, though good-nature pre-

vented me from showing my dislike, I could never meet any of the hunters with satisfaction. The little pleasure I took in the only society that was to be obtained, still farther confirmed me in my recluse mode of life. When my resolution appeared unchangeable, I was suffered to live as I pleased, with the character of an odd but inoffensive man. In this unmolested retreat I found time to go through a complete course of ecclesiastical history. I acquired a sufficient knowledge of the oriental languages to enable me to read the Polyglott. I wrote a great number of sermons and theological treatises, and made many corrections in the vulgar translation of the Bible. So wholly engrossed was I by my darling pursuits, that I seldom left my chamber. In vain did the vernal sun invite. The music of a pack of hounds, which frequently passed my window, had no charms in my ears. The rural sports of every kind were tedious and insipid. To my books I returned from every trifling avocation with redoubled pleasure, and endeavoured to repay the loss of an hour in the day, by devoting a great portion of the night to study.

"It is really true, that my chief motive for application was a love of learning. Yet I will be so ingenuous as to own, I sometimes formed a wish that my small share of merit, if I had any, might attract the notice of my superiors. There is a time of life when fame alone appears to be an inadequate reward of great labour. It flatters that natural love of distinction which we all possess, but it furnishes no convenience in the time of want and infirmity. There was in the neighbourhood a little living of one hundred a year, with a house and garden, in a style of decent elegance which becomes a scholar. The patron was the 'squire of the next parish, who had always treated me with singular respect. I was

foolish enough to suppose his regard for my character would induce him to bestow his benefice on me; but I found, when it became vacant, he had staked and lost the next presentation at a game at whist with a clerical fox-hunter.

"I was at last taken notice of by my diocesan. He had heard of my indefatigable diligence, and recommended me to an eminent publisher, as a proper person to make an index to a very voluminous work. I eagerly undertook the task, with a view to please so great a man, and finished it in less than a year and a half. The books were printed on a small letter, and this work did my eyes an injury which they will never recover; but it must be owned, on the other hand, that the bookseller gave me in return a bank-note of ten pounds. An index-author seldom acquires reputation. He is indeed seldom known; but if he happens to be discovered, the accuracy of his work is, in the opinion of many, a kind of disgrace to him. It seems to argue a degree of phlegmatic dulness, and of patient labour, rarely in the power of genius. It will not therefore be thought wonderful that this laborious work produced no other effects than the injury of my eyes, and the payment of my tailor's bill. My diocesan forgot both me and the employment in which he had engaged me. Indeed, I could not look to him for preferment; for all his nephews and cousins went into orders, under his sanction, for the purpose of taking the livings in his gift as they fell. And the little perpetual curacy in the neighbourhood, worth eighty pounds a year, which I had fixed my heart upon, was given to a borough-monger's natural son, at the immediate request of the then prime minister.

"In this curacy I still continue, without any prospect of change, unless when blindness, occa-

sioned by intemperate study, or the infirmities of age, shall oblige me to resign. I am not of a discontented disposition, nor do I relate my condition with a design to criminate others for their neglect of me. Preferment I never sought by those methods which the world agrees to be the best suited to procure it. I have therefore no right to complain of the want of that which I did not rightly pursue. My motive for this communication is to prevent others from incurring misery by a too great attachment to objects laudable in themselves. I can never discountenance an attention to literature. I still love it. I still venerate those that have excelled in it. But a sincere regard for many of the most amiable and useful of my species, induces me to remind them, that they have a body which requires a great share of their attention, and that no satisfaction arising from study can ultimately counterbalance the loss of sight, and that long train of nervous diseases superinduced by unremitted application.

"I mean not to excite your sympathy; nor will I exaggerate my evils by description. My appearance has already convinced you that I am the victim of disease. Nor will you hesitate to believe that the stone, the gout, the hypochondria, which have worn out my tender frame, were derived from an attention unrelieved by the usual and necessary relaxations.—Had I been wise enough to have mounted a horse during the intervals of reading, and to have entered into cheerful company at the close of a thoughtful day, I might have prolonged my favourite enjoyments to a happy old age.

"I am philosopher enough to bear with patience a condition which I cannot alter; yet I sometimes think, though without the least degree of envy, that an old school-fellow of mine, of a very different

turn from myself, is far happier. I remember I used to laugh at him, and think him very silly, when at the time we were at the university together he would miss an ingenious lecture for the sake of a ride, and spend the five shillings with which I should have bought a book in the hire of a horse. It is true, indeed, that he needed not, and ought not, to have neglected his mental improvement, because he had many opportunities of relaxation after the hours of study were elapsed. Yet, if I judge of his conduct by the apparent effects of it at present, it appears to me in a less blameable light than it used to do. He is now at the age of sixty-three, for he was somewhat older than myself, and retains all the vigour and alertness of a young man. His countenance is hale, his limbs muscular, and he reads the service and the newspaper, the only things he does read, without spectacles.

"He set out in life as friendless as myself. He engaged in a curacy in a sporting country. His love of field-diversions soon introduced him to what was called the best company. He possessed the external graces of behaviour, and at the same time was deeply skilled in horse-flesh, and had Bracken's Farriery by heart. Such merits could not long pass unrewarded. A baronet in the neighbourhood grew fond of him, and introduced him to his family; one of whom was an only daughter of no great personal or mental accomplishments. My friend, however, admired her fortune, and found no difficulty in obtaining her hand. The living on which he now resides was part of her portion, and though of no great value, yet it furnishes him with a pretty snug sporting-box. He commonly reads prayers in his boots and spurs, while his hunter stands neighing in the porch till honest Moses has twanged through his nose the final and joyful Amen. It

is true, my old friend has no taste, no learning, no refinement, but he has the use of his eyes, and a never-ceasing flow of spirits; he can walk as well as ever, possesses an excellent digestion, and plenty to furnish it with constant employment.

"But his example is not to be followed, since he has run into an extreme more culpable, though less pernicious to himself, than mine is to me. Far happier and wiser the philosophical Euphranor, who, with the warmest affection for learning, restrained it, as he has every other inordinate attachment, by the rules of prudence; and by paying all the attention which nature and reason require to his body and to his mind, has advanced the condition of both to a high degree of attainable perfection.

"In me you see a body and a mind, worn out in professional labours without obtaining a sufficiency to lay my weary limbs in the grave. I wanted a FRIEND throughout life; but the parish will afford me at last all I now require, a quiet and obscure sepulture. Farewel."

NO. CLXIX.—ON THE MERITS OF COWLEY AS A POET.

THE biographers of our English authors have sometimes fallen into a mistake which renders the truth of their story suspected. Their accounts are truly panegyrics. The hero of their tales, like the lover in the romance, is adorned with every good quality. Not content to relate facts with impartiality, they extenuate what is culpable, and exaggerate all that can admit of commendation. In truth, they who have exhibited the lives of our authors, have usually

been the editors of their works; and either from a real and natural fondness for those things on which they have bestowed care, or from the less laudable motive of promoting the circulation of a book in which they were interested, have spoken too highly even of those who merit applause. But it is not wonderful if the trader represents his own merchandise as the best in the market-place.

It was the lot of Cowley to be handed down to posterity by a writer who was famous in his day for eloquence. Dr. Spratt probably undertook the office of Cowley's biographer, with a design to display his talents in a species of oratory which the Roman rhetoricians called the demonstrative. He discharged it well as an artist, but failed as an accurate historian. By placing Cowley in the first rank of poets, he has in effect degraded him from the subaltern station which he had else preserved unmolested. Dr. Spratt owed much of his fame to the poet who had compared his style to the gentle and majestic current of the Thames; and returned the compliment, perhaps from other motives than those of gratitude; for the higher Cowley was exalted, the greater honour was reflected on those whom he had commended. Of Spratt, the celebrated bishop of Rochester, lord Orrery has said, few men have gained a greater character for elegance and correctness, and few men have deserved it less. And of the poet whom he praised, the great Dryden has with diffidence remarked, that somewhat of the purity of English, somewhat of more equal thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the numbers, in one word, somewhat of a finer turn and more lyrical verse is yet wanting.

Whatever are his defects, no poet has been more liberally praised than Cowley. Lord Clarendon has said, he made a flight above all men; Addison, in

his account of the English poets, that he improved upon the Theban bard: the duke of Buckingham writes upon his tombstone, that he was the English Pindar, the Horace, the Virgil, the Delight, the Glory of his time. And, with respect to the harshness of his numbers, the eloquent Spratt tells us, that if his verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as one would have them, it was his choice, and not his fault.

Such is the flattery of editors! and such the applause lavished on a writer who is now seldom read. That he could ever be esteemed as a Pindaric poet, is a curious literary phenomenon. He totally mistook his own genius, when he thought of imitating Pindar. He totally mistook the genius of Pindar, when he thought his own *conceits* and numbers bore the least resemblance to the wild, but harmonious sublimity of the Theban. He neglected even those forms, the strophe, the antistrophe, and epode, which imitative dulness can easily copy. Sublime imagery, vehement pathos, poetic fire, which constitute the essence of the Pindaric ode, are incompatible with witty points, accurate antitheses, and vulgar expression. All these imply the coolness of deliberate composition, or the meanness of a little mind; both of them most repugnant to the truly Pindaric ode, in which all is rapturous and noble. Wit of any kind would be improperly displayed in such composition; but, to increase the absurdity, the wit of Cowley is often false.

If the end of poetry is to please, harmony of verse is essential to poetry, for, without it, poetry cannot please. It is not possible, that any whose ear has been attuned to the melody of good composition, should read a single ode of Cowley without being shocked with discord. There is often nothing left but the jingle at the end, to distinguish some poems

of Cowley renowned for their sublimity from affected prose. Such poetry may justly incur the ridiculous title of prose run mad.

Yet is there sometimes interwoven in his poems a purple patch, as Horace calls it; a fine expression, a truly poetical thought, an harmonious couplet; but it occurs not often enough to repay the reader for the toilsome task of wading through a tedious assemblage of disproportionate and discordant stanzas. Of such consist his Pindarics; which, though they procured him the greatest share of his reputation, deserved it least. Many of his other poems, if we consider the rude state of versification, and the bad taste of the times, have great merit; and had he made Tibullus his model, instead of Pindar, his claim to the first rank of elegiac poets had not been called in question. The tenderness of love, and the soft language of complaint, were adapted to his genius. But he chose to tread in the footsteps of Alcæus, as he says himself, who, according to the Halicarnassian, combined the μεγαλοφυες και ηδυ, the grand and the sweet.

That Cowley had a taste for Latin poetry, and wrote in it with elegance, the well-known epitaph upon himself, upon his retirement, and one most admirable imitation of Horace, are full proofs. But surely his rhetorical biographer makes use of the figure hyperbole, when he affirms that Cowley has excelled the Romans themselves. He was inferior, as a Latin poet, to many a writer of less fame in the Musæ Anglicanæ. But still he had great merit; and I must confess I have read some of his Latin verses with more pleasure than any of his English afforded. The good ones are few; the bad and the barbarous greatly predominate.

But, after all the honours that have been accumulated on his name as a poet, his great merit con-

sisted in prosaic composition. In this department he is an elegant, a pleasing, a judicious writer. His love of retirement and contemplation qualified him for a moralist; and it is much to be lamented, that he did not devote a greater part of his time to a kind of writing which appeared natural to him, and in which he excelled. The language of his heart shines forth in the little he has left us, and we cannot but love it.

Much more of that language would have descended to posterity, if his friends, from a mistaken opinion of propriety, had not suppressed his private letters. Dr. Spratt and Mr. Clifford were avowedly possessed of many; and the very reason assigned by the biographer for their suppression, should have operated in their publication. The letters that pass between particular friends, says Spratt, if they are written as they ought to be, that is, I suppose, in an artless manner, can scarcely ever be fit to see the light. How great an injury would polite learning have sustained, if the friends of Cicero had thought like Spratt and Clifford!

They would better have consulted the reputation of the poet, had they pronounced the Pindarics unfit to see the light. Editors, in general, would act more honourably, in exhibiting only the best of their author's productions, than in praising, as well as publishing, all that has fallen from his pen. But, in truth, to have left out any part of his poems, would, in that age, have been an unpardonable omission; for who should dare to mutilate a Pindar?

Time, the great arbiter of reputation, has already begun to strip the poet of his borrowed honours. Bishop Hurd, a critic whose genius and judgement keep pace with each other, and who illuminates every subject on which he treats, has allotted Cowley

his just species of praise, and has given the world, in a judicious selection of his works, all that they possessed of real value.

Of these the prose forms a principal part. The prose of Cowley is written in a style sufficiently flowing to prove that he was not destitute of a musical ear; a circumstance which countenances the opinion of those who maintain that he affected a rugged style. Was it a compliance with the taste of the age that induced him to affect deformity? Unfortunate compliance with a deplorable taste! He, as well as they whom he imitated, Donne and Jonson, were unquestionably possessed of great learning and ingenuity; but they all neglected the graces of composition, and will therefore soon be numbered among those once celebrated writers, whose utility now consists in filling a vacancy on the upper shelf of some dusty and deserted library.

NO. CLXX.—CURSORY AND GENERAL HINTS ON THE CHOICE OF BOOKS.

THE scarcity of books, a few centuries ago, was the principal obstacle to the advancement of learning. The multitude of them is become, in the present age, scarcely less injurious to its interests, by distracting the student in his choice, and by diffusing an incorrect, a frivolous, and undistinguishing taste.

To read all books on all subjects would require an uninterrupted attention during the longest life even of an antediluvian. To read only the most celebrated, written in a few languages, is an employment sufficient to fill up a great portion of the time allotted us in this sublunary state. For the sake

then of saving time, and of directing the judgement of the inexperienced, it becomes a useful attempt to suggest some general hints which may tend to facilitate selection.

One rule of the greatest consequence is, to read only, or chiefly, the original treatises in all the various departments of science and of literature. Nearly the same space of time, though not the same degree of attention, is necessary to peruse the faint copies of imitative industry, as would appropriate to the student the solid productions of native genius. This rule is more particularly to be observed on the first entrance on study. The foundation must be laid deep, and formed of solid materials. The superstructure will often admit slight and superficial appendages. When we have studied the fine relics of those who have lived before us, we may derive much pleasure from attending to the additional labours of contemporary genius. But to begin with these is to found, like the fool recorded in the Gospel, an edifice in the sand.

It were no less presumptuous than superfluous to address directions in the choice of authors to the learned. But we may venture, without arrogance, to point out a few to the notice of the young and ingenious pupil with a design to abbreviate or facilitate them.

He who is entering on the study of divinity, will naturally devote his first attention to the Scriptures. The original language of the Old Testament is often unknown even to the learned and ingenious; and notwithstanding what some critics and professors have, as it were, *officially* observed on the subject, the neglect of it, though culpable, is seldom attended with much disadvantage. Many divines in the highest stations have been totally unacquainted with Hebrew. But the knowledge of Greek is indis-

pensably necessary, if theology is pursued as a profession.

The prophetical parts will, perhaps, claim the greatest share of a professed student's attention in the perusal of the Old Testament. Dr. Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies will be a sufficient guide for subsequent application to them. To illustrate the New Testament, it will be proper to have recourse to Percy's Key to it, to Trapp's Notes, to Locke on the Epistles, and to Mede on the Apocalypse. With these assistances the student, who is not deficient in natural ability, will make a competent proficiency, even though he should totally neglect those myriads of treatises which have rendered the body of divinity, as it is called, enormous beyond comprehension.

The student in physic is commonly introduced to the knowledge of it by a public lecturer, who superintends, or at least directs, his course of reading. Natural and experimental science, in all their ramifications, are in some degree requisite to his further advancement. These alone will, indeed, render him ingenious in his closet, but will avail little at the bed-side without other aid. To these must be added a most accurate observation of the human frame in all its vicissitudes of health, disease, and convalescence. The reading of cases accurately delineated, is found to be the best succedaneum, where actual practice and observation are precluded. System, without ocular observation and actual practice, is in general insufficient and delusive.

To the professed lawyer, scarcely any book on the subject of law is uninteresting or useless. But he who pursues the study merely as an accomplishment in a comprehensive plan of education, will find all the necessary lights in the volumes of Grotius, Puffendorf, Taylor, Burn, and Blackstone.

He who wishes to gain a complete knowledge of grammar, may succeed in his attempt, without loading his memory with the works of Priscian, or of those thousands who have toiled in this circumscribed province. Let him, after having studied grammatically the elements of Latin and Greek in the common grammars, digest the Minerva of Sanctius, the Hermes of Harris, and the Introduction of Lowth.

The art of rhetoric, delivered in a technical form, never yet formed an orator. It is one of those artificial assistances of genius, which genius wants not, and of which dulness can little avail itself. But as there are excellent books written on it, the general scholar must pay it his attention. Let him then read Cicero on the Orator, and Quinctilian's Institutes, and he need not trouble himself with those meagre treatises which give a hard name to the natural modes of expression, and teach us that, like Hudibras, we cannot open our mouths but out there flies a trope.

He who is impelled by necessity or inclination to attend to logic, may with propriety neglect all the rubbish of the schools, and, next to the Stagyrite himself, study only the logical introductions of Sanderson, Wallis, Watts, or Aldrich.

If the barren field of metaphysics is ever capable of repaying the toil of cultivation, it can only be when the attention is confined to such authors as Locke and Hucheson.

If ethics are to be considered in the systematical method of a science, the moral philosophy of Hucheson may be recommended as one of the clearest, the most elegant, and the concisest treatises that have appeared upon them. Aristotle's Ethics are admirable, but there is no translation of them which I can recommend. Tully's Offices and Paley's Mo-

ral Philosophy may be read with great advantage. But the numerous writers who have fabricated fanciful and destructive systems, may be suffered to sink in the gulf of oblivion never to emerge.

In natural philosophy, the airy fabrics of hypothetical visions ought not to claim the attention of a moment. The sun of Newton has absorbed the radiance of all other luminaries in this department. His works and those of his followers will, of course, supersede the infinite number of preceding folios, which, to use the expressions of Horace, may be sent to wrap up frankincense and perfumes, the only way in which they can now be useful. He to whom the works of the great philosopher are unintelligible, may acquiesce with security in the illustrations of Pemberton, Rowning, Ferguson, and many other recent experimentalists. The lover of natural history, zoology, and botany, will not be at a loss in the selection of books, while fame resounds the names of Buffon, of Pennant, of Linnæus. The romances of Pliny and his imitators will have no charms with the lover of truth. Their language is often good, but their matter contemptible.

To the classical scholar, the proper books are usually pointed out by the superintendents of his education; and when once he has tasted them, his own improved taste and judgement will direct him in the choice of modern productions. Every one knows who were the best authors in the Augustan age; and the chief caution necessary is, that the text of a Virgil, a Horace, an Ovid, may not be lost in the attention given to the tedious comments of a few Dutchmen and their dull imitators. I have known those who have toiled through the classics *cum notis variorum*, much less acquainted with them than he who never read them but in Sandby's edition. In attending to Burman and Heinsius, they

overlooked the text, which was lost like a jewel in a dunghill. These laborious annotators explain what needs not explanation, and with a little critical knavery pass by a real difficulty without notice. I am convinced that a taste for the classics is rather impeded than promoted by the Dauphin edition, in which boys are initiated; but in which the words of the author are choked, like wholesome plants among weeds, by the notes and interpretations. To be possessed of comments on the classics is however desirable, for difficulties will sometimes occur which at first sight perplex the most ingenious; but I should prefer, for common reading, such editions as that of Jones's Horace.

Directions for the formation of the lady's library have often been wanted by those, who, with an inclination for the elegant amusement of reading, have been unable to indulge it properly, because they had none to guide them in their choice. In my humble opinion, the following books might have a place in it, not only without hazard of ill consequences, but with great advantage to taste, and to that personal beauty which arises from intellectual elegance. All the periodical publications of repute that have been written on the model of the Spectator; Rollin's works, Plutarch's Lives, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and the most esteemed historians of their own country, may be confidently recommended. To these, for the sake of imbibing a classical taste, may be added the best translations of the ancients, such as Pope's Homer and Melmoth's Pliny. If French books are required, those of Boileau and Fontenelle may with propriety be admitted. Novels, it is feared, will not be dispensed with; those then of Richardson and Fielding are allowed, yet not without reluctance. The ladies will choose in this department for themselves. Every thing indelicate

will of course be excluded; but perhaps there is not less danger in works called sentimental. They attack the heart more successfully, because more cautiously. Religious books will find a place, but not without restriction; for there is a species of devotional composition, which, by inflaming the passions and imagination, contributes, in some degree, to corruption, while it seems to promote the warmest piety. From their sensibility of heart, and warmth of fancy, the softer sex is supposed to be most inclined to admit the errors of mystics and enthusiasts; and many devotees have shown, that passion of the religious kind is not always a certain preservative of virtuous conduct.

NO. CLXXI.—CURSORY REMARKS ON THE ODYSSEY, ON POPE'S TRANSLATION, MR. SPENCE'S ESSAY, &C.

It is generally agreed, that the Odyssey is inferior to the Iliad. It is thought by Longinus, as well as by other critics, to have been the production of Homer's old age, when it may reasonably be supposed the ardour of his genius was in some degree abated. "In the Odyssey," says that critic, "he may be justly said to resemble the setting sun, whose grandeur still remains without the original heat of his beams. Like the ocean, whose very shores, when deserted by the tide, mark out how wide it sometimes flows; so Homer's genius, when ebbing into all those fabulous and incredible ramblings of Ulysses, shows plainly how sublime it once had been. I am speaking of old age, but it is the old age of Homer."

It is certain, that if the Odyssey is not to be

placed in the same rank with the Iliad, so neither ought it to obtain so low a class as to be overlooked and disregarded. It has, however, been neglected by the moderns; and they who have been able to repeat the Iliad, have scarcely deigned to read the Odyssey. Every school-boy is acquainted with the anger of Achilles, and its consequences, while he neither knows, nor is solicitous to learn, the adventures of the wise Ulysses; though wisdom, it may be supposed, would be commonly a better model for his imitation than valour.

An ingenious writer has endeavoured to vindicate the Odyssey from the neglect in which it has long lain; but a prepossession in favour of established customs has hitherto prevented our public schools from substituting it in the room of the Iliad. That the Iliad should be neglected, is not indeed to be wished, because it is by far the better poem; but that it should engross our whole attention to the utter exclusion of the Odyssey, is certainly unreasonable.

The Iliad presents us with a rough prospect, like that of high mountains, craggy rocks, and foaming cataracts; while the Odyssey exhibits a softer scene, and suggests ideas similar to those which arise from the landscape, where all is mild, serene, and beautiful. The one is like the pictures of Poussin, the other like those of Claude Lorrain. A reader admires the Iliad, but he loves the Odyssey.

The works of Homer appeared so early in the world, and since their appearance have been so frequently praised and illustrated, that at this late period it is not necessary to add to the general panegyric. Suffice it to recommend the perusal of a few authors, which may clear the way to the study of the Odyssey. Among these are the papers in the Adventurer on this subject, Pope's Notes to his

translation, and, above all, Mr. Spence's very elegant and ingenious Essay. As to the translation itself, it abounds with faults and absurdities. Without derogating from the merit of Pope as an original poet, we may venture to pronounce his Odyssey a paraphrase, rather than a just translation of Homer. The copy no more resembles the picture than the portrait on a sign-post usually resembles the personage intended to be exhibited. The chief beauty of Homer is simplicity, which, in the translation, is sacrificed to a gaudy glare and artificial embellishments. As a poem considered by itself, it has many beautiful passages; but as a translation, it is perhaps unworthy the reputation it has obtained. The translation of the Iliad is by no means a faithful copy of the original, but of itself it is a fine poem, scarcely to be equalled for its language by any English author.

To censure so celebrated a name, might appear arrogant in an individual, were he not supported by many and judicious critics. Mr. Spence, whose opinion is decisive, and *instar omnium*, points out defects in Pope's translation of the Odyssey, which could never have escaped so great a poet but from haste and weariness. In this work, Pope was assisted by inferior writers; but as the whole is published under his name, he will ever be answerable for its faults.

Mr. Spence's Essay on the Odyssey, at the same time that it will exhibit the deformities of the translation, will inspire a taste for the beauties of the original; and, indeed, the general remarks, which are interspersed with the greatest judgement and elegance, will contribute to teach a just method of criticism in almost every species of poetry.

Mr. Spence was a truly classical writer. That he chiefly wrote in dialogue is to be lamented; for that form, where the persons are fictitious, has sel-

dom been approved in England, though it has often succeeded in France. His Polymetis would have been much more read than it has been, if it had not been written in dialogue.

NO. CLXXII.—THOUGHTS ON THE ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS OF SOPHOCLES, AND SEVERAL CIRCUMSTANCES RESPECTING THE GRECIAN DRAMA.

Of the three Greek dramatic poets, Sophocles is the most celebrated; and of the productions of Sophocles, the Œdipus Tyrannus is the most excellent. It has stood the test of the severest criticism. The unities of time, place, and action are inviolably preserved in it: and while it satisfies the critic who judges by the laws of Aristotle, it pleases the common reader and spectator, who forms his opinion from the feelings of his nature. Never was there a tale more affecting than that of Œdipus, and never was any tale told more pathetically than this is by Sophocles. Many a tear has it excited among the Athenians, whose hearts were ever finely susceptible of the sentiments of humanity: but the best translation of it would not equally please in a modern theatre. Many other causes of its failure may be assigned, besides that simplicity, artlessness, and incomplexity of fable, which the taste of the moderns is too much vitiated to relish.

In the first place, it must be considered, that every original composition must lose something of its beauty from the best translation. It is a common remark, that the spirit of an author, like that of some essences, evaporates by transfusion. Foreign manners, and foreign customs, are seldom understood by a common audience, and as seldom approved. The majority of an English audience are

unacquainted with ancient learning, and can take no pleasure in the representation of men and things which have not fallen under their notice. Add to this, that they love to see tragedies formed on their own histories, or on histories in which they are in some measure nearly interested. When Shakespeare's historical dramas are represented, they feel as Englishmen in every event; they take part with their Edwards and Henries, as friends and fellow-countrymen; they glory in their successes, and sympathise with their misfortunes. To a similar circumstance may be attributed part of the applause which the Athenians bestowed on this tragedy of Sophocles; for Œdipus was king of a neighbouring country, with which the Athenians were always intimately connected either in war or peace.

These considerations should teach us to content ourselves with admiring Sophocles in the closet, without attempting to obtrude him on the stage, which must always accommodate itself to the taste of the times, whether unreasonable or just, consistent or capricious.

In truth, the warmest admirer of ancient Greek poetry must acknowledge a barrenness of invention in the choice of subjects. The Trojan war, and the misfortunes of the Theban king, are almost the only sources from which those great masters of composition, Homer, Æschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, have derived their subject-matter. They have, indeed, embellished these little parts of history with all the fire of imagination and melody of poetry; but is it not strange, that in a country like Greece, where the restless spirit of military virtue was continually forming noble designs, and achieving glorious exploits, the poets could discover no illustrious deed worthy of being painted in never-fading colours, but the worn-out stories of a wooden

horse, and a sphinx's riddle? It is difficult for an age like the present, which hungers and thirsts after novelty, to conceive that an audience could sit with patience during the recital of a story which all must have heard a thousand times; especially as it was unadorned with the meretricious artifices of players, with the tricks of the stage, with thunder and lightning, hail and rain, tolling bells, and tinsel garments.

But the sameness of the story in the Grecian poets became agreeable to the audience, through that veneration which every record of ancient history demands; and it was a kind of poetical fashion to select the stories from the Trojan war. That the tale on which a dramatic poem is founded should not be of modern date, has, I think, been laid down as a rule. Nor is it the precept of an arbitrary critic, but is justified by nature and reason. Imagination always exceeds reality. The vulgar could never prevail upon themselves to look on scenes, to the reality of which they have been eye-witnesses, with the same ardour as on those which they have received from their ancestors, and have painted with the strongest colours on their fancy. In obedience to this rule, the Greek poets borrowed their subjects from ancient facts universally known, believed, and admired; and the audience entered the theatre to behold a lively representation of the picture already formed in their own imagination.

A modern reader has not a preparatory disposition of mind necessary to receive all that pleasure from these compositions which transported an ancient Greek. He does not glow with that patriotic ardour which he would feel on reading glorious deeds of a fellow-countryman, when Homer represents a hero breaking the Trojan phalanx and encountering a Hector. He does not consider an an-

cient Theban or Athenian involved in the guilt of undesigned parricide or incest, nearly enough connected with him to excite his sympathy in a violent degree; but all these feelings in a Grecian audience, occasioned by a Grecian sufferer, account for that uncommon delight which they took in their dramatic representations, and for their freedom from that satiety which might otherwise have been occasioned by the reiteration of a simple tale. After all, I think, if pedantry is to be imputed to the admirers of Grecian literature, it is when they prefer the dramatic compositions of Greece to those of England; and I must reluctantly confess, that the minute students of Greek quantity in the Greek tragedians, who assume great merit in their frivolous studies and discoveries, are both puerile and pedantic.

An English audience has lately shown itself not so averse from the ancient tragedy as was expected, by its favourable reception of Elfrida and Caractacus, written on the Grecian model: but, perhaps, this event is not so much to be attributed to the revival of the fine taste of an Attic audience, as to the insatiable avidity of something new. The English are as fond of the καινον τι, in literature, as the Athenians were in politics: but whether caprice or reason, whether taste or fashion, gave them a favourable reception on the English stage, it is certain that Elfrida and Caractacus are elegant dramas, formed on the ancient model, and may be read with great advantage by those who wish to entertain a just idea of the Greek tragedy without a knowledge of the language. Yet what are they to Hamlet and Macbeth?

NO. CLXXIII.—CURSORY REMARKS ON SOME OF THE MINOR ENGLISH POETS.

We are told, in the epistle to the Pisos, that poetical mediocrity is intolerable; yet we find that poets of inferior merit, as well as fame, are read with pleasure.

It is true, indeed, that the loudest melody of the grove is poured forth by the lark, the blackbird, the thrush, and the nightingale: but it is no less true, that their pauses are often filled by the sweet warblings of the linnet and the red-breast. The lofty cedar that waves on the summit of the poetic mountain, seems to overshadow and exclude, by its luxuriance, all other vegetation. He, however, who approaches it, will find many a violet and primrose springing at its root. He will often discover in the lowliest valley, amid a plentiful growth of weeds, a modest flower lifting its humble head, and becoming more beautiful by seeming to conceal the native sweetness of its odour, and the lustre of its hues.

The first dignities in the poetical commonwealth are preoccupied by such writers as Spenser, Milton, Dryden, and Pope; but, at the same time, the numerous subaltern stations are frequently filled with honour.

Many poets of original beauty were in their own times so obscure as to be now totally unknown. Such are the authors of our most popular ballads, the general reception of which is a proof of their excellence, more convincing than the decisions of criticism. The learned poet has commonly owed much of his excellence to imitation; but the ballad-writer drew only from his own resources when he sung the wild wood-notes of nature. Their metre often possesses a kind of harmony quite different

from classical versification, yet, at the same time, truly pleasing to the uncorrupted ear.

Of the poets of England once known and admired, several are fallen into total disrepute. Drayton was honoured by a commentator who must have given fame to any writer. If Selden's taste was equal to his learning, Drayton is indeed most highly distinguished. The Polyolbion is, however, no more read; and the slow length of the tedious Alexandrine in which it is written, will prevent its revival, as it has hastened its oblivion.

The Gondibert of D'Avenant has ever been the subject of critical controversy from the time of its publication. Its plan was originally defended by the great Hobbes, and its execution has been greatly praised. Yet few have attended to it with any pleasure, and still fewer have had a degree of patience sufficient to bear them through the perusal of it. The truth is, the stanza which D'Avenant adopted, is better suited to elegiac than to heroic poetry. A beautifully descriptive passage, interspersed in the course of two or three hundred lines, will not alleviate the tedium of the rest; as an occasional flash of lightning cannot illuminate the continual gloominess of an extensive prospect.

For the honour of English literature, most of the poetical productions which were admired in the reign of Charles should now be consigned to everlasting oblivion. They display, indeed, a sportive licentiousness of fancy, or rather a loose wantonness of imagery; but they are incorrect beyond the example of any age. Some of the best poets of the times, among whom were Mulgrave, Dorset, and Roscommon, though possessed of wit and taste, produced nothing worthy of immortality. The morals of the age were as licentious as the taste; and the love of pleasure introduced an indolence, which ad-

mitted not an application sufficient to give the last polish of correct elegance. I should not repine at seeing them all burnt at a holiday bonfire. More than half the minor poems in our language might be thrown in to increase the blaze. A wit might say, they would put the fire out.

The study of the ancients, and of the French, has gradually refined the national taste to a degree of fastidious delicacy; and writers who have possessed classical beauty have been read with admiration, though they have had nothing to recommend them to the notice of a Charles the Second or a Sedley.

The number of minor poets who displayed great merit, yet who seem to have derived it all from imitation, is too tedious to enumerate. Philips and his friend Smith were correct and classical in a degree superior to their contemporaries. Philips has performed the task of imitation, with an accuracy of resemblance scarcely equalled by any of his followers but Browne. The Phædra and Hippolitus of Smith has ever been esteemed a fine poem; and the beauty of the style, and harmony of the verse, induce us to regret that he lived to finish so few productions. Yet, I think even this has been much more praised than it deserved.

Within the space of half the last century, a desire to imitate the excellent models of our most celebrated bards, has crowded the middle ranks with a multitude too great to obtain, even for the deserving individual, any very distinguished fame. One poet has arisen after another, and supplanted him, as the wave succeeding swallows up the wave that went before. Most of them have exhibited an harmonious versification, and have selected a profusion of splendid expressions; but have in general been deficient in that noble fire, and those simple graces, which mark originality of genius. They are, how-

ever, read by those whose taste is not very correct, with pleasure, and fill up the intervals of avocation among the busy and commercial, who are unacquainted with the Greeks and Romans, and with whom novelty often possesses the charm of beauty.

There is a force and solemnity in the poems of Tickell, which at least place him on a level with his patron as a poet. His Colin and Lucy is one of the most sweetly pathetic poems in the language.

Broome, though honourably associated with Pope in the work of translation, seems to have had scarcely any other merit than this to bear him down the stream of time. He might be thrown on the bonfire.

Trapp wrote Latin verse with elegance, and was a good critic; but it has been observed of his Virgil, that he had done wisely to have stopped at his preface. He was an excellent divine, yet a sorry poet.

The genius of Collins seems in some measure to have resembled that of Tickell. Dignity, solemnity, and pathos, are the striking features of his compositions. None but a true poet could have written the song over Fidele in Shakespeare's Cymbeline.

The English Tibullus, Hammond, has written truly elegant verse; but I know not whether his representations greatly affect the heart, though they are coldly approved by the judgement and imagination. They have, however, served as patterns for the love-sick nymphs and swains, who delight in giving vent to their passion in the language of poetry. Yet, as he expresses not the language of nature, I love him not.

Love and its effects were beautifully described by the elegant Lord Lyttelton. To assert that he was remarkable for poetical genius, were to lessen, by endeavouring to exaggerate, his praise. Force, fire,

and exuberance of invention, were not his excellencies; but that equable beauty of sentiment and diction, which results from a polished mind. The graces distinguish his compositions, as the virtues marked his honourable life. But genius was deficient.

Moore's Fables display indubitable marks of genius; but he wants the simplicity of Gay and Fontaine. He shows, however, a talent for description which would have shone in the higher kinds of poetry; and a delicacy of mind, which, it might be supposed, could be acquired only in a higher sphere than that in which he was born.

Genius and learning were possessed in a very eminent degree by Merrick. He had that peculiar kind of genius which qualified him to excel in the department of sacred poetry. It is to be wished, that his version of the Psalms were adopted in churches where the congregations are learned and polite, not only in the place of Sternhold and Hopkins, but of Brady and Tate. Such an event would be no less advantageous to piety than to taste; though happily the common congregations are not fastidiously nice in their taste for poetry.

Upon the whole, we may say, with Horace, that mediocrity in poetry renders it undesirable "to gods, to men, and to booksellers." We certainly have too much of it in the present age. It is become a nauseous dose, though wrapped up in hot-pressed and wire-wove paper.

NO. CLXXIV.—CURSORY AND UNCONNECTED REMARKS ON SOME OF THE MINOR GREEK POETS.

The intrinsic graces of the classic writers have charmed every mind which was susceptible of the beauties of spirit, taste, and elegance. Since the revival of learning, innumerable critics have employed themselves in displaying the beauties which they felt, or in removing the difficulties and obstructions which retarded their progress in the perusal of the ancients. At present, there is scarcely any room for criticism on them; and the most laborious commentator finds, with regret, his profoundest researches, and his acutest remarks, anticipated by the lucubrations of former critics; but as there is scarcely a greater difference between the features of the face, than between the faculties of the mind in different men, and as objects must strike various feelings in various manners, the works of taste and genius may, on different reviews, furnish inexhaustible matter for critical observation. Upon this principle, authors of the present age venture to add to the labours of their predecessors, without fearing or incurring the imputation of vanity or impertinence.

The present remarks shall be confined to some of the Greek Minor Poets, without minutely attending to chronological, or any other order.

In the union of dignity with sweetness, of melody with strength, the Greek is better adapted to beautiful composition than any modern language. The Italian has all its softness, but wants its force. The French possesses elegance and expression, but is deficient in sound and dignity. The English is strong, nervous, flowery, fit for animated oratory and enthusiastic poetry, but abounds with Saxon or Gothic monosyllables, ill adapted to express the

music of mellifluous cadence. To compare the Dutch and the German with the language of Athens, were to compare the jarring noise of grating iron with the soft warblings of the flute. The other languages of Europe are equally unfit for harmonious modulation, and indeed cannot properly be examined in this place, as the people who speak them have not yet distinguished themselves by any writings truly classical.

The Greek Epigram naturally falls first under our present consideration. Of these little compositions, which owe their origin to Greece, none can be insensible of the beauty, whose taste is not vitiated by the less delicate wit of the modern Epigrammatist. Indeed, to relish the simple graces of the Greek Epigram, the taste must not be formed upon the model even of the celebrated Martial. Among the Latin poets, Catullus approaches nearest to the Greeks in this species of composition.

The Anthologiæ, still extant, are written by various authors, and there are scarcely sufficient epigrams of any one, to discriminate his manner from that of others. Suffice it to remark, in general, that their beauty does not often consist in a point, or witty conceit, but in a simplicity of thought, and a sweetness of language. I suspect that many of them are no better than our common church-yard inscriptions, of which the authors have often been the imitators of Sternhold and Hopkins, that venerable order of minstrels and parish clerks. But Greek gives a charm to the poorest thoughts of the most puerile epigram. In plain English, the clerks and sextons of an English village often surpass the poetry of the Anthologiæ, in which Sternhold himself is often *outsternholded*.

The golden verses of Pythagoras, though not remarkable for splendour of diction or flowing versifi-

cation, are yet highly beautiful in the concise and forcible mode of inculcating morality, and virtues almost Christian. The earlier philosophers of Greece conveyed their tenets in verse, not so much because they aspired to the character of poets, as because precepts delivered in metre were more easily retained in the memory of their disciples. Pythagoras has comprised every necessary rule for the conduct of life in this little poem, and he that commits it to memory will not want a guide to direct his behaviour under any event: but though the morality of these is their more valuable beauty, yet are they by no means destitute of poetical merit.

That generosity of soul which ever accompanies true genius, has induced the poets and philosophers of all ages to stand forth in the cause of liberty. Alcæus, of whose merits from the monuments of antiquity we may form the most exalted idea, first raised himself to eminence by a poem entitled Stasiotica, in a violent invective against tyrants in general at Pittacus, at that time the tyrant of Athens. It has not escaped the general wreck, and we have only a few broken specimens of this celebrated writer's works preserved by the ancient grammarians. We must, therefore, be content to learn his character from the judicious Quinctilian, and the learned Dionysius of Halicarnassus: the former of whom asserts, that he was concise, sublime, accurate, and in many respects resembled Homer: the latter, that he had a grandeur, brevity, and sweetness equally blended throughout all his compositions.

Stesichorus, according to Quinctilian, was remarkable for strength of genius. He gave to lyric poetry all the solemnity of the Epopœa. Had he known how to restrain the impetuosity of his genius, it is said he would have rivalled Homer: but, unfortunately, the noble warmth of his temper urged him

beyond the bounds of just writing, and he seems to have failed of excellence by a redundancy of beauties.

The fragments of Menander are sufficiently excellent to induce every votary of learning to regret the loss of his works. Some indeed have thought, that time never gave a greater blow to polite literature, than in the destruction of the Comedies of Menander; but as Terence has preserved his spirit and his style, perhaps the want of the original is compensated by the exact copyings of that elegant author. Quinctilian, from whose judgement there is scarcely an appeal, has represented Menander as alone sufficient to form our taste and style. The few remains, preserved by Stobæus, whether the beauty of the sentiments or the purity of the diction be regarded, must be pronounced uncommonly excellent. They are, however, too generally known to require illustration.

Simonides is characterised by Longinus as a poet remarkable for the pathetic. Of his writings very few have survived the injuries of time. The little poem on Danaë is, however, sufficient to justify the judgement of Longinus. Nothing can be more delicately tender, or more exquisitely pathetic. There is something inexpressibly pleasing to the mind, in the representation of a mother addressing a sleeping infant unconscious of its danger, with all the endearing blandishments of maternal fondness.

The other remarkable poem of this author, which time has spared, is of a very different kind. It is a Satire on Women, and is well known by a prosaic translation of it inserted in the Essays of a celebrated modern writer.

Alcman of Laconia is another melancholy instance of the depredations which the hand of time has made on the most valuable works of antiquity.

Of this author, once celebrated throughout Greece, quoted by the learned and repeated by the fair, scarcely the name is known in the present age. Athenæus, Hephæstion, the scholiast on Pindar, Eustathius, and Plutarch, have vindicated him from absolute oblivion, by preserving a few of his fragments. Love verses, which since his time have employed some of the greatest writers, and have been admired by the most sensible readers, say the critics, were of his invention. All who preceded him had invariably written in Hexameter. He subjoined the elegiac verse, and may justly claim the honour of having introduced that species of poetry, which Ovid and the other Latin elegiac writers have since advanced to a most pleasing species of composition. I rather think nature invented them.

Archilochus wrote iambics and elegiacs; the former, satirical; the latter, amorous. That he succeeded in his attempts, we have sufficient reason to conclude from the testimony of Horace. There is not enough of him remaining, to enable us to form a judgement of the impartiality of his decision, and we must be contented to acquiesce in his authority.

Lucian says, in one of his dialogues, that the poets have given Jupiter many of the most pompous epithets, merely for the sake of a sonorous word to fill up a verse. The hymns of Orpheus abound with these expletives; and the reader is often disgusted with sounding verse almost destitute of sense. If, however, they were composed for music, they may pass uncensured by some: for it seems to have been generally and most absurdly agreed, and it is observable at this day, that very little attention is to be paid to the words of Operas, Odes, and Songs, which are written merely for music. The poems of Orpheus, if those which are extant are like all his productions, would certainly move no stones.

What has been said of the hymns of this poet, may be extended to many other Greek compositions of the same species. General censure will, however, seldom be just; and it must be confessed, that there are some among them, particularly those of Callimachus, truly sublime and beautiful.

There was a species of poetry among the Athenians, which, in some measure, resembled many of our English ballads. At the approach of a war, or after a victory or defeat, the poets and statesmen usually dispersed among the people some short composition, which tended to animate them with courage, or to inspire them with joy. Solon, the wise legislator of Athens, was too well acquainted with the power of poetry over the human heart, to neglect this efficacious method of enforcing his laws, and propagating his institutions among the lower ranks of the Athenians. There are still extant some of his pieces, which bear internal marks of having been purposely written to give the people a passion for liberty, to inspire them with a love of virtue, and to teach them obedience to the laws. They are, indeed, written in the elegiac measure, but have nothing of the soft amorous strain which distinguishes the Ovidian elegy. They are manly, moral, and severe. By these, it is a well-known fact, the Athenians were animated to resume a war which they had dropt in despair; and, in consequence of the ardour which these inspired, they obtained a complete victory over their enemies. There are several in the English language equally good as poems, and, as it is said, productive of similar effects.

Tyrtæus wrote in a similar style, but entirely confined himself to martial subjects. So strongly is military valour, and the love of liberty, enforced in his little compositions, that it would by no means

be absurd to attribute the victories of the Grecians over the Persians, as much to a Tyrtæus, as to a Miltiades or Themistocles. The effects of such political ballads have been frequently seen among the English in time of war. Every one has heard of Lillabullero.—Many a poor fellow has been tempted to quit the plough and the loom for the sword, on hearing a song in praise of Hawke or Wolfe roared by his obstreperous companions. These verses are too deficient in point of elegance to admit of quotations, and the frequent opportunities of hearing them from the mouths of the vulgar render repetition in this place unnecessary. The bards of Grub-street are commonly the authors of our martial ballads; but at Athens they were written by poets, statesmen, and philosophers. We may judge of the influence of their productions, by the powerful effect of our rude and even nonsensical rhymes. The more nonsensical the more popular.

Few ancient authors have been less read than Lycophron. His obscurity not only retards but disgusts the reader; yet, perhaps, his want of perspicuity, though highly disagreeable to the student, is an excellence in a work consisting of predictions. Prophecies and oracles have ever been purposely obscure, and almost unintelligible. The mind that attends to these uninspired predictions of paganism, voluntarily renounces reason, and believes the more as it understands the less; but, whether Lycophron is to be praised or censured for obscurity, certain it is, that on this account he will never become a favourite author. Notwithstanding the labours of the great Potter, he is still difficult, and will probably continue to repose in dust and darkness, amidst the dull collections of antiquated museums. If he were sacrificed to the genius of dulness, none need bewail the loss of Lycophron.

The poems of Bacchylides, however he is neglected by the moderns, were highly honoured by an ancient, who was esteemed a complete judge of literary merit. Hiero hesitated not to pronounce them superior to the odes of Pindar, which have been generally celebrated as the utmost efforts of human genius. The opinion of Hiero may, ho[illegible] the questioned, with an appearance of justice, [illegible] is considered that his character, as a critic, was established by his courtiers, who, to gain his favour, might not scruple to violate the truth.

The gay, the sprightly, the voluptuous Anacreon is known to every reader. His subjects and his manner of treating them have captivated all who are susceptible either of pleasure or of poetry. There is, indeed, an exquisite tenderness, delicacy, and taste in the sentiments; but I have always thought he derived no small share of his beauty from the choice of expressions, and the peculiar harmony of his verses. It has been objected to him by rigid moralists, that his writings tend to promote drunkenness and debauchery. But this objection might in some degree be extended to a great part of the finest writers in the lyric and epigrammatic line, ancient and modern. A man of sense and judgement will admire the beauties of a composition, without suffering its sentiments to influence his principles or his conduct. He will look upon the more licentious sallies of Anacreontic writers as little *jeux d' esprit*, designed to please in the hour of convivial festivity, but not to regulate his thoughts and actions in the serious concerns of life. Whatever may be the moral tendency of the writings, it is certain that as a poet he is unrivalled in that species of composition which he adopted. Many have been the imitations of him, but few have succeeded. The joys of love and wine have indeed been de-

scribed by his followers; but their touches are more like the daubings of an unskilful painter, than the exquisite traits of a masterly hand. Cowley, whose genius certainly partook more of the Anacreontic than of the Pindaric, has been one of his happiest imitators, for he is rather to be called an imitator [illegible]anslator: but the English reader will not [illegible] a just idea of the merits of Anacreon from those Bacchanalian songs which so frequently appear under the title of Anacreontic. Indeed there is no good translation of Anacreon: neither is it desirable that there should be. Dissolute and unprincipled persons may wish to turn a penny by exciting the libidinous passions, or recommending drunkenness, under the name of Anacreon; but they deserve the contempt of all who regard the happiness of society. The passions and tendencies to voluptuousness and intemperance are sufficiently strong without the *stimuli* of licentious rhyme.

The passion of love was never more strongly felt or described than by the sensible Sappho. The little Greek ode preserved by Longinus, the metre of which derives its name from her, has been translated by Mr. Philips with all the air of an original. The Latin translation of Catullus appears much inferior to that of our countryman. The Greek indeed is much corrupted, and, as it now stands, is less pleasing than the English. Every one, who on reading it recollects its occasion, must lament that so warm a passion, so feelingly represented, was excited by an improper object. She wrote also a tender hymn to Venus. But her works are happily lost.

Scaliger, whose judgement, though sometimes called in question, ought certainly to have great weight, bestowed very extraordinary praises on the writings of Oppian; a poet who, though he has

been compared to Virgil in his Georgics, is only perused by the curious in Grecian literature, and is known only by name to the common reader. The emperor Caracalla, under whom he flourished, is said to have been so charmed with his poems, as to have ordered him a *stater* for each verse. Modern critics will, however, dare to call in que[illegible] taste of Caracalla. The works of Oppian consisted of halieutics, cynogetics, and ixeutics, the latter of which have perished by the injuries of time. He was a grammarian, which, in the idea of the Greeks, meant a professed scholar; and, in every age, the poems of men who professed literature have been less admired than the vigorous and wild productions of uncultivated genius. The former are contented to avoid faults, but genius labours after beauties only. Apollonius is more correct than Homer, and Jonson than Shakespeare; but Apollonius and Jonson are coldly approved, while Homer and Shakespeare are beheld with astonishment almost equal to idolatry. It should, however, be remarked to the honour of Apollonius, that the judicious Virgil borrowed several of his most celebrated similes from him; and perhaps he is not to be ranked among the *poëtæ minores*. Oppian has met with the usual fate of grammarians, and has scarcely been read; but the reader of taste will yet find many passages, which, if they are not sublime, he must confess to be beautiful.

Tryphiodorus has been introduced to the English reader by the excellent translation of the ingenious Mr. Merrick. Homer he certainly imitated, and has succeeded in the imitation. Copies taken by great masters, though inferior in general, yet in some parts commonly rival their original. Tryphiodorus reaches not the sublimer flights of the Mæonian bard, but he sometimes follows his less

daring excursions at no distant interval. It is enough to recommend him to general approbation, that with a moderate portion of Homer's fire he has more correctness. He may be read with advantage not only in a poetical, but in an historical, view. Where Homer discontinued the thread of his story, Tryphiodorus has taken it up. Indeed this poem is a necessary supplement to the Iliad, without which the reader is left unsatisfied. Tryphiodorus is said to have written another poem, called Οδυσσεια λειπογραμματη, in which he has omitted, through each book, the letter which marked the number of it. Such a kind of composition is trifling and beneath a man of genius; but it must be allowed to be a work of great difficulty, and consequently a proof of great application. Nor ought it to injure the character of Tryphiodorus as a poet, but to be viewed as the wanton production of an ingenious, but ill-employed grammarian. If Homer wrote the Battle of the Frogs and Mice, and Virgil descanted on his Gnat, without losing the dignity of their characters, inferior writers may indulge the inoffensive sallies of whim, without the imputation of folly or puerility.

In the perusal of some of these, and other of the minor poets whose works are extant, the lover of the Grecian muse finds a pleasing variety, after reading the more sublime and beautiful productions of Homer. But I think it would be, upon the whole, a benefit to literature, if there could be a general clearance of rubbish; and if the minor poets, like the stars at sun-rise, could be made to disappear entirely on the effulgence of a Homer, a Virgil, and a Milton. Life is too short to be consumed on the study of mediocrity.

NO. CLXXV.—A CONCLUDING ESSAY.

THE writers of periodical papers have usually subjoined, at the close of their lucubrations, an account of the origin and progress of their work, explained the signatures of correspondents, and assigned each paper to its proper claimant.—I am now arrived at the end of the third volume, the boundary prescribed to my excursions; but I have, I believe, no information of this kind remaining to be communicated. I have already accounted for the origin of this work, and intimated, that the composition of it has served, at various times, and in different situations, to amuse a few intervals of literary leisure; and, with respect to assistants and correspondents, the nature of the undertaking could not possibly admit them. If, therefore, any praise should be thought due, it must come undivided, and contribute to lessen whatever severity of censure may be incurred, the whole weight of which must fall without participation.

I mean not, however, to delude myself with an idea of influencing a reader by apologies: the submissions and excuses of authors are of little importance; the public claims an uncontrovertible right to decide for itself on every composition which solicits regard; and its final decisions are usually no less just than immutable.

Instead then of dwelling on such topics, I will take leave of the candid reader, if any reader should have had patience to accompany me so far, by a summary recapitulation, and perhaps addition of a few admonitions which may be salutary. I pretend not to collect all the scattered remarks which have preceded, into one point of view, but merely to repeat and add such as may possibly occur in filling

up the paper which now lies before me. I hope the egotism will be pardoned on this and several other occasions, as it is by no means easy at all times to speak in the third person of one's self without evident affectation.

I have endeavoured, throughout the whole series of these Papers, to warn those who are entering into life (and to them my admonitions are chiefly addressed) against those fashionable examples which often militate against all that is decent, regular, virtuous, and learned. Unless we are taught in our youth to be on our guard against their destructive influence, we shall certainly incur imminent danger of corrupting our principles and practice, by a blind and bigoted imitation. Experience daily evinces, that, without this precaution, all the advantages of a virtuous and learned education, all the documents of paternal care, all prudential, moral, and religious restraints may be totally frustrated. The rich and great may be considered as beacons on a promontory; and if they hang out deceitful lights, they who will allow no other signal to direct them (and the number of these is infinite) will probably be misguided in the voyage of their lives, till they are dashed on rocks or sunk in whirlpools. I think I can confidently declare, that I was not influenced by splenetic or envious motives, when I attacked the pride, folly, and wickedness of some among the *nominal great*, who justify every enormity, under the name of fashionable indulgence; but that I have been actuated solely by a sincere conviction, that such an attack is the most effectual means of promoting the interest of virtue. Even an enemy will allow that it is not the most approved method of advancing private interest, for it may offend those in whose hands are the riches and honours of this life.

If I have at any time indulged an asperity of cen-

sure, it has arisen from an honest detestation of vice, meanness, selfishness, and insolence, in those whose example is seducing, and consequently most injurious. The rank and opulence of worthless persons has had no other effect on me than to excite additional indignation. If any feel themselves hurt by my animadversions, their very pain is a proof that they suffer deservedly. Nothing in this book can make a worthy man my foe; and with respect to the unworthy, I fear not their power, and I despise their malevolence.

In adopting modes of address and external behaviour, the study of which appears to engross the attention of many, I have advised the young man to begin his work at the foundation; to correct his heart and temper, that the graces of his appearance may proceed from that copious and infallible source of whatever is pleasing, a disposition truly virtuous and unaffectedly amiable. I have exhorted him to avoid servility, adulation, preferment-hunting, and meanness of every kind; to endeavour, indeed, to please those with whom he converses, but to let the endeavour arise from benevolent motives, from a humane and Christian desire of diffusing ease and happiness among the children of one Almighty Father, and the partakers of the same miserable nature. I have advised him to be firm, yet gentle,—manly, yet polite: to cultivate every ornamental accomplishment which leads not to effeminacy, and to study to be as agreeable as possible, while he can be at the same time sincere; to despise, and most studiously avoid, that common but base character, which, with motives peculiarly selfish and contracted, pretends to uncommon good-nature, friendship, benevolence, and generosity; whose assiduities are proportioned to the rank or fortune of the persons who are courted, without the least regard to virtue

or attainments; whose politeness is that of a valet or French dancing-master, and whose objects, after all its professions and pretensions to liberality, are no less mean and dirty than those of a Jew usurer.* I have advised him to value the approbation of his own heart, and the comforts of a clear conscience, above the smiles, the applause, and the rewards of a vain, a wicked, a deceitful, and a transitory world.

In literature, I have recommended the union of taste with science, and of science with taste; a selection of the best authors on all the subjects which claim his particular attention; a love of originals, and a due distrust of translations; a constant effort to obtain depth and solidity; a persevering, regular, indefatigable industry, especially in the earlier periods of a studious course, not only because no distinguished excellence can be obtained without it, but also because a close attention to study, and an ardent love of letters in the juvenile age, is a great preservative of innocence, and conduces much to the diversion or extinction of passions and tendencies which cannot be habitually indulged without sin, shame, and misery.

The general tenour of the moral admonitions of this book, has been to urge the young man to labour incessantly in overcoming the natural propensity of human nature to evil: to aim at perfection, though he knows he cannot reach it; to aim at it, because he will thus approach much nearer to it than if he gives up the pursuit in the timidity of indolence:

* It may be proper to mention that this paper was written soon after the publication of Lord Chesterfield's Letters; a book, which caused many of the strictures in the preceding Essays, it appearing to militate against all moral and religious principle.

to have courage enough to withstand ridicule, the weapon of the wicked in their subtle attacks upon virtue; to beware of the refinements of sophistry, and to be humble enough to learn his duty both to God and man, from the plain doctrines of his catechism: to beware also of the seducing influence of fashionable vice; of those unfortunate persons, who, from a want of education, or from foolish pride, *live without God in the world,* and even in contradiction to the obvious precepts of natural religion; existing in a state which might almost be called the vegetable, if it did not in a greater degree participate of brutality.—Addresses of a serious kind are to such persons, for the most part, useless, as that pride, self-conceit, and self-imporance, which leads them to adopt with ostentation the tenets of infidelity and the practices of immorality, usually renders them deaf and blind to all representations which come *unrecommended by opulence, rank, and libertinism.* They are wiser in their own eyes, though they often neither read nor think, than the wisest moralists who have yet appeared. But the young man who has been taught not to be dazzled by the false lustre of their characters, will soon learn to pity their errors and shun their example. It is a just remark, which has been made by men intimately acquainted with the living world, that more are ruined by vices which they have adopted through vanity and silly imitation, than to which they have been seduced by the violence of passion and temptation. He who lessens the force of such examples, and obscures those glossy colours which they derive from high stations and large fortunes, greatly promotes the cause of morality, and contributes much to prevent the misery and ruin of a rising generation.

In forming political principles, I would uniformly maintain the expediency of always leaning to the side of liberty and the people, and of withstanding, by all legal and rational means, the encroachments of arbitrary power. All men who possess power, well established and confirmed, are naturally inclined to extend and engross it. Let a spirit then be constantly encouraged among the people at large, which may lead them to a jealous vigilance over the possessors of power, and animate them to a manly resistance on the slightest infringement of constitutional liberty. But, at the same time, we must not suffer the artful pursuers of their own interest to delude us by a name enchanting in the sound: we are bound to consider, in our dispassionate moments, the nature of liberty; to see and acknowledge the necessity of subordination, and the happiness of being governed by the equitable operation of impartial laws; to consider the preservation of good order and public tranquillity as greatly conducive to the perpetuation of liberty, when it is once established on a solid basis: to distinguish between a real love of liberty, and a mere impatience of control, which is found to prevail in the bosom of envious and malignant men: to discern the difference between real patriotism and a selfish opposition to present authority, in whomsoever invested, arising from a hope of partaking of it on their deprivation; to remember that experience has abundantly confirmed the remark, that the loudest advocates for liberty, while out of power, are often the most arbitrary and tyrannical, both in the exercise of power, when they have obtained it, and in their private lives and natural dispositions: to beware of the needy adventurer in politics, who has nothing to lose, and has no prospect of gain but in demolishing the fabric

raised by others, and enriching himself in the general plunder. Such cautions can never be too frequently repeated to the middle ranks, who have been in all ages miserably deluded by the wicked pretensions of a pseudo-patriotism.

I have endeavoured to evince the propriety of appointing men of private virtue and good character to the great, honourable, and efficient offices in the various departments of the state. It is difficult to conceive but that the accumulation of public honours on men of bad characters in private life, is at once destructive of morality, religion, and national prosperity.

It is certainly right to disbelieve and to reprobate all pretensions to public virtue, wherever private virtue is *notoriously* deficient. Where private virtue is wanting, there can be no soundness of principle; and without soundness of principle, no real virtue of any kind can subsist. Patriotism in a bad man is but disguised wickedness, of a most malignant nature, and usually proceeding from a deceitful, a proud, an envious, a jealous, a cruel, and a selfish disposition. The boasted abilities of profligate and corrupt characters, are often but the desperate efforts of a distress which has overcome all diffidence and restraint, and leads men to fight their way to promotion, by noise, effrontery, and overbearing presumption.

We all, indeed, love power, and it is an useful impulse which urges us to aspire at eminence; but though we may reasonably wish for a share of power, let us learn the virtue not to obstruct its salutary operation in the hands of others, merely because it is not in our own. The truest patriotism may often be evinced, by subduing the lust of power, by submissive silence, and by cheerful acquiescence, in a

contented retirement, and in an humble exercise of the private and social virtues. The lust of power, like all other lust, is often most violent in diabolical dispositions; and the turbulent spirit which it produces is the bane of society.

But amidst our cautions, we shall do well constantly to remember that liberty, with all its accidental evils, is, upon the whole, infinitely more conducive to the happiness and to the improvement of human nature, than the tranquil repose of established despotism. An arbitrary government diffuses a benumbing, freezing, soporific influence over the human faculties, especially in the middle and lowest walks of life; and there is no danger or inconvenience which ought not to be cheerfully incurred to destroy it from the face of the earth. The tree of liberty, so well planted and watered in America, will, I hope, flourish more and more; and impart many a slip and sucker to grow in climates which now appear most ungenial to its cultivation. In our own island, we must never neglect the opportunity afforded by a time of distress, to correct the abuses of the constitution, and to push back the gigantic strides of power, with its auxiliary, corruption. Such are the auspicious periods, the golden moments, in which a portion of new health is to be infused into the vitals of the body politic: such the times in which the authorities lawfully constituted ought to purge the corrupting influence which contains the seeds of disease and death to a free commonwealth; in which petty boroughs should be disfranchised, and counties enabled to send a number of members in proportion to their size, wealth, and populousness; in which Old Sarum should no longer be permitted to constitute as many representatives of the people of England as the county of York,

and half as many as the metropolis of the empire. But as all great political changes are attended with danger, they should not be attempted without the utmost caution and deliberation. Great changes are attended with great calamities; and nothing but absolute necessity can justify any violent alteration in the political system. But it should be considered that renovation, or the restitution of original principles, is by no means innovation. The deviations from them, introduced by corruption, are the INNOVATIONS.

It is impossible to recapitulate all the variety of suggestions which have preceded, or to make any great addition to them, in the limits of a single paper; neither was it my intention. It is sufficient that a few of the most important points are touched upon in the conclusion of these volumes, with a view to leave a due impression on the mind of the reader, who may be induced, for want of something better, to bestow an idle hour on their perusal. The subjects of Behaviour, Letters, Morals, and Politics, have been already mentioned: it would be a reprehensible omission not to have reserved a place for a few hints on Religion.

It appears to me to be one of the most important precepts in forming our religious principles and ideas, not fully to depend on the conclusions of our own reason; to distrust the acutest understanding; to be really humble; to reverence the opinions received by our forefathers; to remember the shortness of life, the imbecility of human nature, and to accept with pious hope, rather than with disputatious curiosity, the comfortable doctrines and promises of the received revelation. It will be a great inducement to this prime virtue of humility, to reflect on the diseases and pains both of mind and

body incident to our nature; on the terrible degeneracy into which we may fall, when deserted by the grace of God; and, at the same time, on the consolation and improvement of heart which may be, and is derived, under every calamity and on the bed of death, from sincere devotion; to pray for faith when doubts arise; to beware of that weak and [illegible] vanity which instigates the deistical and sceptical pretenders to superior powers of reasoning, to write and publish their sophistical and presumptuous tenets on the national religion. Let us ever remember that common but excellent maxim, that we can lose nothing but what would hurt us, and may gain every thing that is valuable, by receiving, with humble hope, the religion of Jesus Christ.

Upon the whole, and after all the subtle disquisitions of proud philosophy; all the inventions which owe their origin to malice, vanity, or ingenuity; all the whimsical modes of living and thinking which fashion dictates for the employment of her idle hours, or for the gratification of her full-blown pride; the plain virtues, as they are understood by plain men of honest hearts and good faculties, improved by a competent education, are the best security for comfort under all the circumstances, and in all situations of human life. Sedentary and recluse persons may amuse themselves, in the reveries of inactivity, with speculative refinement and sceptical subtleties; but they who are really wise, and earnestly wish to obtain the happiness of which they are capable in this sublunary state, must descend from the elevated regions of sophistry, and labour to acquire, with the assistance of common sense and common honesty, the virtues of faith, humility, piety, and benevolence.

I am happy in the opportunity of adding my tes-

timony, incon[illegible]derable a[illegible], [illegible] all plans of con[illegible]duct, and [illegible]s, [illegible] dependent of these virtue[illegible], must term[illegible]ate in [illegible] and vexation; and that these will [illegible]p'y a pe[illegible] nial fountain of such consolation [illegible] world [illegible] neither give no[illegible] take away.

THE END.

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